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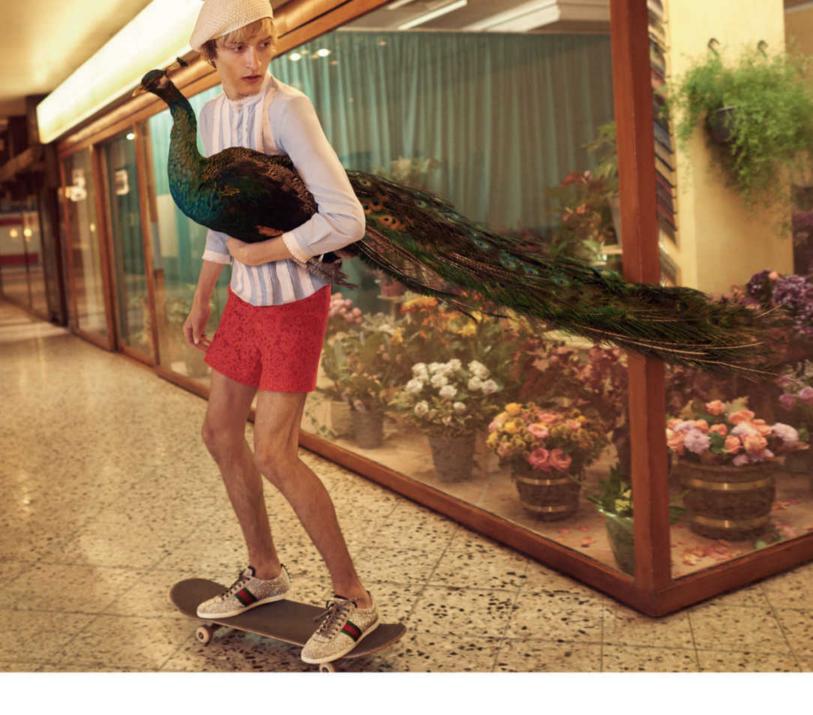


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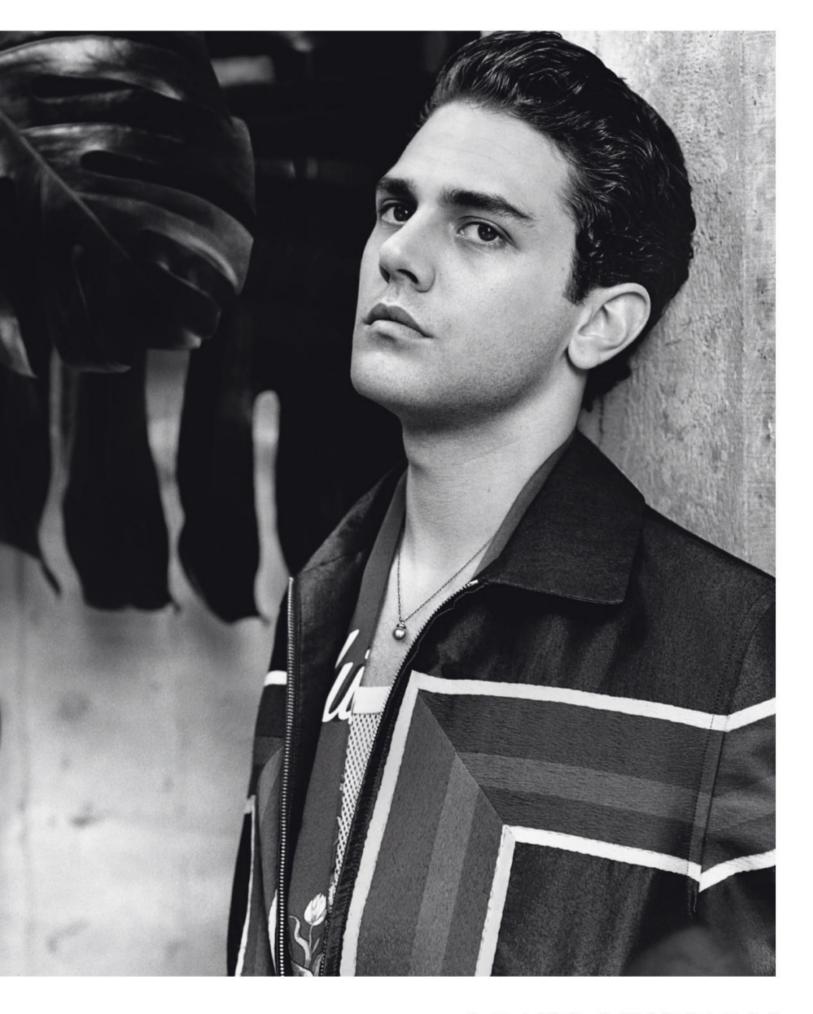






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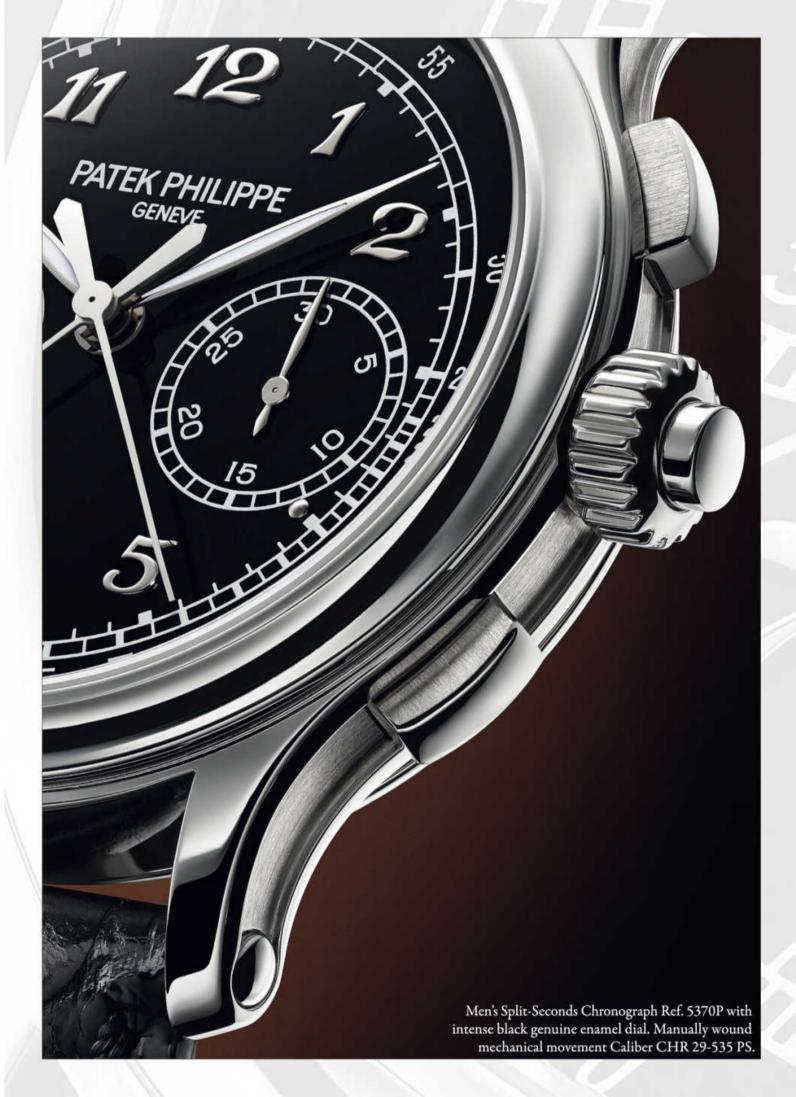














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COVERS









Derek Zoolander

Photographs Simon Emmett

Derek Zoolander wears Newsstand editions

Far left: black/white velvet jacket and trousers; black/white striped cotton shirt; black silk tie, all by Dolce & Gabbana. Second left: navy silk patterned scarf; blue leather jacket; navy silk roll-neck; black silk trousers, all by Louis Vuitton. Third left: black wool trench coat; black/floral-embroidered wool jacket; black silk-satin shirt; black wool trousers, all by Burberry.

Subscriber edition Navy/pale blue/orange jacket and trousers; black/yellow suede loafers, all by Prada

Hearst Studios | Simon Emmett

Esquire

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Ralph Lauren Purple Label's leather saddlebag backpack

CONTRIBUTORS

Tim Lewis

"I was surprised to learn that at one point, the studio planned to make the original Zoolander with Brendan Fraser as Derek," says Esquire's contributing editor, who met the now cult film's co-writer, director and star Ben Stiller on the set of the long overdue follow-up (see interview on page 152). "Somehow, I don't think there'd be clamour for a sequel of that 15 years on." Lewis's book, Land of Second Chances, is out now.

Catherine Hayward

"Even though this was Derek's first time in Esquire, he was very eager to show us the full breadth of his range and experience," says our fashion director, who is responsible for the selection of attire modelled by Zoolander in our spring/summer collections fashion shoot. "From Blue Steel to Magnum, Derek's expertise was deeply moving," Hayward continues. "I 'heart' this guy!"

Simon Emmett

The contributing photographer's is the only pair of hands in which we would entrust such a global phenomenon as Derek Zoolander. They got on like a house on fire, too: "I could not stop laughing," Emmett says. "To watch him through a camera, posing, is magical. He is a master of his own look, untouchable in what he does." Watch Emmett's behind-the-scenes footage of the photo session on esquire.co.uk.



Salvatore Ferragamo

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Can you find fashionable clothes to wear in Britain's backwaters? Style director Teo van den Broeke took his eagle eyes and £200 to rural Pembrokeshire to rummage through its rails







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CONTRIBUTORS

Teo van den Broeke

"When I was told by the editor of this magazine that I was to be sent shopping for serviceable clothing in the farthest wilds of Wales with a teeny-tiny budget, I'll admit that I was apprehensive. But I needn't have worried," says Esquire's style director. "Who knew that you could find such great-fitting, well-made clothes in army surplus stores?"

Jeremy Langmead

"Travelling with Esquire years ago taught me the art of diplomacy," says Langmead. "It also helped me master the use of the ambiguous compliment. And how to have fun while spending two weeks staring at trousers go up and down catwalks for 12 hours a day. Yikes." Also brand and content director at Mr Porter, the Esquire style columnist's tips for fashion survival can be found on page 76.

Giles Coren

"Since the first two episodes of my country experiences appeared in *Esquire*, life has started to catch up with art," says the editor-at-large. "In Gloucestershire, wherever I go, people say how they enjoyed my stories and what lunatics the people sound, without realising it's them I was writing about. Quite curious/worried about how the local gypsies are going to feel about this month's offering..."

Getty I Chris Leah I Toby Leig





Modern Essentials selected by DAVID BECKHAM



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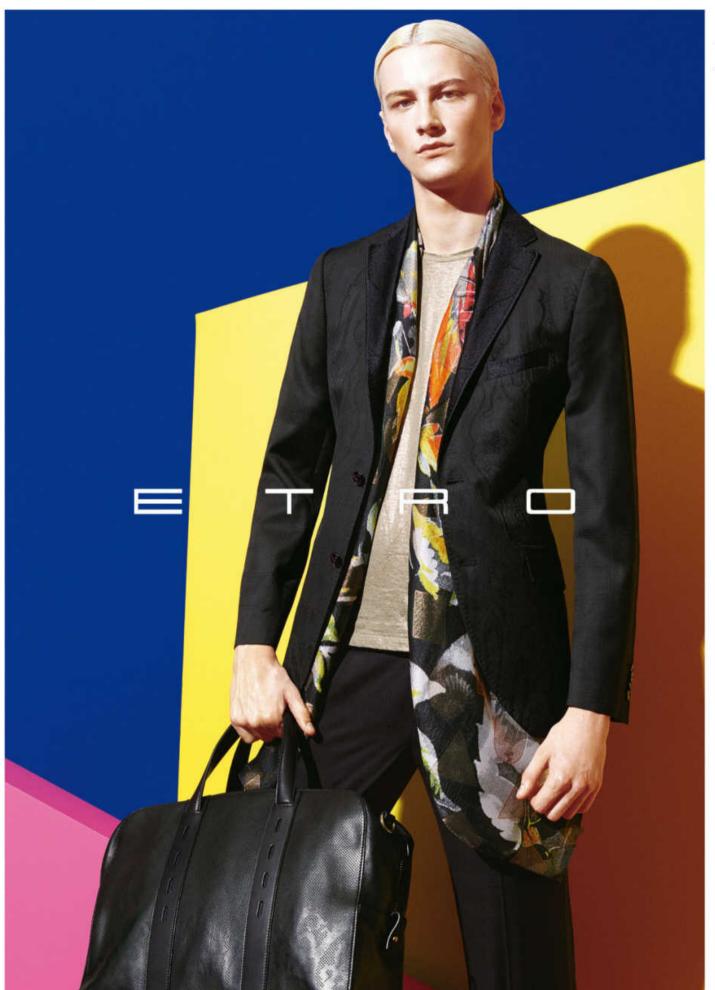
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EDITOR'S LETTER

Ask most of us chaps to name a supermodel and the usual suspects will be sent sauntering down the runways of our minds: Kate, Naomi, Cindy, Linda, Gisele... or perhaps the younger and more social-media savvy *Esquire* reader will name one of the new breed of fashion plate: Cara, Karlie, Gigi. What do all those have in common? That's right: not a single one of them has had a major movie made about her life. Neither has any one of them endowed a Center for Kids Who Can't Read Good and Wanna Learn to do Other Stuff Good Too. Or — so far as I know — been brainwashed to kill the Prime Minister of Malaysia. (Mossy may have been approached at one point, though doubtless she was already fully booked that season.) Oh, yes. And they're all girls.

Start again. Ask most of us chaps to name a male supermodel and you'll hear the same name trotted out over and over again, murmured like a mantra: David. David Gandy. Push a bit harder, though, ask your favourite fashion stylist (what do you mean you don't know any?) to nominate the male supermodel whose influence most potently defines men's style in the 21st century and one name looms large and longer than any other. Still not sure? I'll tell you. It's Derek Zoolander.

When it came time to cast the cover of *Esquire*'s spring style special issue his name was first on my list, as it always is. Who better, after all, to showcase the best in the new season's collections from Paris, London, New York and Milan than a figure who bestrides the world of menswear like a Cuban-heeled colossus?

"Get me Zoolander," I told Tom Macklin, Esquire's celebrity wrangler. (I can be surprisingly masterful when I'm in the mood.) "Put him in Gucci, in Prada, in Burberry, in Vuitton, in Dior, in Dolce & Gabbana," I yelled at our fashion director, Catherine Hayward. "Make him work up a sweat," I commanded Nick Millington, our creative director. "Show me Blue Steel, show me Magnum, show me Le Tigre," I implored Simon Emmett, cover photographer extraordinaire.

If only we could persuade Derek into a studio for a day, I knew our crack team could create men's fashion history, a shoot for the ages, a series of heartbreakingly beautiful spreads that fashion-forward boys around the world would rip from these pages and pin to the inside of their cupboard doors, to provide inspiration each night as they carefully planned their outfit for the following day.

Of course, I didn't think it could actually happen. In the past, Tom has orchestrated cover shoots with some of the world's greatest icons of contemporary men's style: Beckham. Clooney. Gary Barlow. The Harry Potter lad. But Zoolander? Surely even the mighty Macklin couldn't scoop the world with the only cover shoot the greatest male supermodel of all time would do to promote his new, eponymous blockbuster sequel? (OK, it's his only cover shoot with the exception of a certain famous American women's magazine, but this is fashion, so we gloss over that.)

Not for the first time, I underestimated the power of *Esquire* and the talents of our people. Derek features on no less than three separate newsstand covers of this month's issue, plus a special cover just for subscribers; he is the star of our 26-page fashion shoot, debuting more looks than I'd dreamed possible (Jaguar, Sanskrit, Mr Jazz...); and he even submitted to an interview for our regular What I've Learned slot. When a figure as substantial as Derek Zoolander consents to share with the world the wit and wisdom hard-earned in his years at the pinnacle of his profession, the canny *Esquire* reader pays attention (turn to page 188).

The fashion coverage doesn't stop there. Not wishing to be outdone, our style director Teo van den Broeke made a very rare foray outside a fashion capital (and not even to go to a spa!) to find out if it is possible to find stylish menswear in rural Britain. Where would he be least likely to find a men's outfitter that meets the requirements of such a cultivated, urbane shopper? Teo decided on Pembrokeshire, the least populated county in the Union. He took intrepid photojournalist Chris Floyd with him, for protection as much as anything, and you can see the results of their derring-do beginning on page 190. (A tip of the hat here to our cousin at American *Esquire*, Nick Sullivan, who pioneered this idea — and pioneered is the word — with a similar trip to Kansas for that magazine last year.)

Now I know there are men out there — perhaps you are one of them — for whom fashion is not the only important concern in life. And you — you sad, sloppy, out of shape, badly dressed, aesthetically challenged people — will be pleased to know this issue is not devoted entirely to clothes. We also have the concluding part of Giles Coren's trilogy of terrifying dispatches from his country man-

sion; the usual unwholesome truth-telling from our agony uncle, AA Gill; a guide covering the best ways to enjoy spring when it arrives; a great recipe from Russell Norman...

Oh, and Tim Lewis went on-set in Rome and into an editing suite in New York to report on the making of a new film from an American actor-writer-producer-director called Ben Stiller (nope, me neither), who I'm told is quite the leading light in Hollywood. Though I must say I was disappointed to hear that this new movie pokes fun at the fashion establishment, which frankly I find a little rude. I don't know who this Stiller fella thinks he is, but he should probably learn to show a bit more respect. As Derek Zoolander would say, for serious.



Alex Bilmes Editor-in-Chief

When a figure as substantial as Derek Zoolander consents to share his hard-earned wit and wisdom, the canny Esquire reader pays attention

men's fashion: Derek Zoolander in 2001







Sigh

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Illustrations by David Lawrence

AA Gill is Esquire's

UNCLE DYSFUNCTIONAL

This month, after decades in the waiting, our scholarly sage attends to the pinnacle of personal predicaments.

The solution? It's all about love, actually

Dear Uncle Dysfunctional,

I used to work as an escort. I come from a poor family. My father was, well, let's just say he was a man. I was a student, I needed the money. It was all quite polite and provincial: business dinners, company awards dos, lonely travelling $sales men\ and, yes, I\ had\ sex\ with\ them, but\ lying\ underneath$ them was far less stressful than sitting opposite them in four-star hotel dining rooms. Anyway, I gave it up when I got my first job. I'm a strategy advisor for small businesses in the retail sector. I don't feel any shame about it. What I did was a means to an end. And now I've fallen in love — with an amazing boy who's a couple of years younger than me. We get on, he's good to me, we've moved in together. He's a committed political activist with a big heart, big dreams and quite a big cock. He does great things for me and we'll do great things for the country. He's going to fight a winnable seat at the next election. He doesn't have much to do with his parents, though — he and his father don't see eye-to-eye. Anyway, his dad came to visit and guess what? He was a client. And he remembers me. He didn't say anything, it was in his eyes. He came back the next day when my lad was out and told me that I had to break up the relationship as it would ruin his son's political career when my past came out, as undoubtedly it would. He knew his son was in love with me and would never go of his own accord, so if I loved him I must set him free. And then he left, saying he knew that I was a good and decent woman, and that was the person he was appealing to. I was distraught. I've only ever been in love once, and I will only ever be in love once. What neither my darling boy nor his father know, nor anyone else, is that I have a congenital weakness - an inherited condition. It's been dormant but now it's not and I will die of it, sooner rather than later.

The conventional wisdom says that you have to let him go. But we don't have to be tied to the moral rigidity of the past. We can ask, what would Richard Curtis do?



And the end will be painful, slow and incapacitating. Must I face this alone, in despair? If I tell my boyfriend he will never leave me, but must I send him away? Completely cut our lives apart? Is our mutual misery the right thing to do? Is this the final act of truly selfless love? Violetta, Royal Leamington Spa

I've been waiting for 40 years to answer this letter, Violetta, which is the mother of all agony. It is the ultimate err agony. So, the conventional wisdom says that you have to let him go, as you intuit. It is the ultimate proof of love. It also means you pass the fragile butterfly of devotion onto him because when he discovers that you have a fatal condition (sorry, by the way — that's a bummer), he then has to exercise his obligation to the courage of love, and give up his career to come back to you. This will naturally be too little and too late, and you will die and he'll be bereft, and that is the tragedy of love as the two great agony aunts of the 19th century, Dumas fils and Verdi, saw it. It's hard to argue with them. But now we don't have to be tied to the connections and the moral rigidity of the past. We can ask, what would Richard Curtis do?

OK, obviously you have to break up with him, but you know >



Being in love and losing it is worse than anything else — bereavement, cancer, worse than being beaten 4-0 by Hull

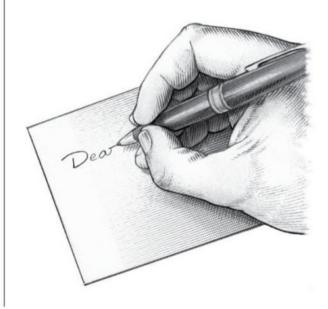
he loves you too much to go on his own. You must make him break up with you by turning up at some public event, probably a school play, with another man. This could be the good-looking but closeted gay older man next door. The boyfriend will see you, be mortified, break up, and prepare to leave the country to go and work for a charity in the Far East. In the meantime, you will weep on the shoulder of the old man neighbour, who will turn out to be a retired/struck-off consultant who notices the telltale symptoms of your hereditary fatal condition, but, by further chance, he will also be the world expert on said condition and he knows that it is curable if caught in time. But, apparently, you only have 12 hours left to get the miracle cure from a cottage hospital somewhere in remote Scotland. The only person who can get you there is the boyfriend's father in his helicopter. After a tearful confrontation, he flies you to Scotland, where a strange and eccentric nurse played, I think, by Eddie Redmayne, administers the cure by enema. Then you have to rush back to London, and sprint to Heathrow to head off the boyfriend at the gate.

But, here's the final twist: while the loudspeaker plays "Fly Me to the Moon" you miss him, just by a moment. Too late: the security guards catch you. But with the help of an enigmatic Rowan Atkinson, you give them the slip. You disguise yourself as an air hostess and smuggle yourself on-board, publicly declaring your love, and health, while giving the safety demonstration. The cabin erupts into applause and, by chance, there's

a brass brand sitting in economy to play Herb Alpert's "This Guy's in Love with You". It turns out that the captain of an airliner is like the captain of a ship, and he can marry you. The wedding reception is chicken or beef from the trolley. And Stephen Fry, who just happens to be travelling in first class, agrees to give the best man's speech over the tannoy. It's the best best man's speech ever. You honeymoon on a deserted tropical island in the Indian Ocean.

You see, that's the real, 21st century-inclusive, two fingers to misery, give us a romantic soft-centred ending. It is the endorphin of reassurance that everything will be all right. So, fuck you Alexandre Dumas fils, and up yours Giuseppe Verdi (or Joe Green as you'd have been known in Camden Town).

Of course, the addendum, if you're thinking of rewriting this as a script for Danny Boyle: just at the end of the best man's speech when Fry says, "Raise your glasses to the bride and groom," a bloke at the back shouts, "Allahu Akbar!" and everything goes white. And then you hear the disembodied voice from the beginning of Love Actually, which goes on about all the people who died in the Twin Towers and their last messages not being about hate but love, but sort of ironic. Except it isn't ironic. Love does transcend everything. Which is the original message of La Dame aux Camélias and La Traviata. But there's no reason why there shouldn't be a happy ending as well. The damnedest saying of all your granny's dim sayings is, "It's better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all." No one who ever loved and lost would say that. It's better to have loved and won than anything else. Being in love and losing it is worse than anything else - worse than bereavement, worse than cancer, worse than being beaten 4-0 by Hull. 2





Email questions for AA Gill to

agonyuncle@esquire.co.uk











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TOPMAN



Cutting loose

Tired of skinny jeans? Then make room for wide-leg trousers

Ever since Hedi Slimane sent outlandishly slender models down the runways for Dior Homme in the Noughties, the skinny silhouette has ruled high fashion and the high street. Over the past few seasons, however, designers have started to embrace trousers with a wider-cut leg. Berluti, Ermenegildo Zegna, Prada, Giorgio Armani, Gucci and Bottega Veneta are among the classic labels producing baggy trousers. And they're easier to wear than you might think.

Esquire Style

Fashion / Grooming / Tech / Food / Cars

Edited by Teo van den Broeke

ESQUIRE APPROVES

Grey/beige mélange wool double-pleated **trousers**, £770, by Giorgio Armani

01 Keep things fitted up top

The looser the trousers, the more tailored a jacket should be, though too much contrast looks silly.

Ensure there's a defined nip at the waist and the trousers aren't too wide and sit just on top of the shoe.

Navy jacquard deconstructed blazer, £1,450; grey viscose crew neck, £300; dark brown leather shoes, £810, all by Giorgio Armani

Photographs by Agata Pec 63









6 Photograph by Luke Kirwan

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SPRING 2016
Glovetanned Saddie Bag in Bordeaux,
Mixed Fabric Jacket on Niels
Whiplash Saddle Bag in Camel on Lexi
coach.com



Seven trends for summer

And, most importantly, how to wear them



SYNC UP WITH THE SEVENTIES

Alessandro Michele at Gucci channels the Seventies in the boldest sense (swathes of suede, flared trousers and tertiary colours), while Bally's micro-cord suit comes in a brilliantly Royal Tenenbaums tan shade. Tod's has also produced a Seventiesinspired range of suede safari jackets and bombers, which are highly wearable.

Beige suede jacket, £2,650, by Tod's; brown suede/wool coat, £3,020, by Gucci; brown suede trousers, £350, by Bally



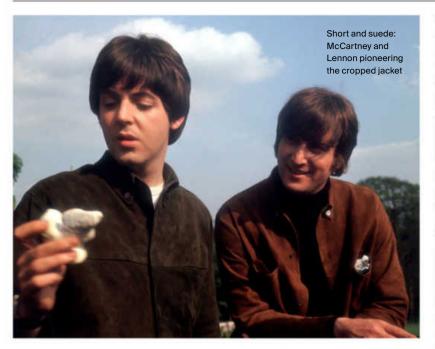


WEAR YOUR SUITS WITH ANYTHING BUT A SHIRT

Most summer suits shown this season were teamed with T-shirts, track tops, vests or jumpers — basically, everything except standard collared shirts. This easy-going look was put together best by Ermenegildo Zegna Couture and Bottega Veneta. Here's some suggestions for how to do it yourself.

Greywool jacket, £995; black merino sweater, £265; greywool trousers, £290; white leather shoes, £350, all by Paul Smith





BUY A CROPPED LEATHER JACKET

This season, every brand has a cropped leather or suede jacket. Opt for a shirt-style collar in a neutral shade, and ensure the hem sits at the top of your hips. Team with slim trousers and chunky shoes.

Brownleather jacket, £1,400, by Coach; tan suede jacket, £1.950, by Bally; black suede jacket, £590, by Oliver Spencer



EMBRACE BOLDER COLOURS*

(*Preferably in a cagoule.) Summer is all about colour and this season presents no exception. The on-trend way to wear it is in a bold, bright outer layer, specifically a cagoule. This option from Dior Homme is the best of what's on offer.

Orange nylon **cagoule**, £1,900, by Dior Homme



TAKE FOOTBALL'S CASUALS AS YOUR NEW STYLE ICONS

They may have caused mayhem on the terraces in the Eighties, but football's casuals liked to look good while they wreaked havoc, and their love of labels such as Lacoste and Sergio Tacchini helped make the tracksuit top that decade's street-style essential. Now, Prada's brought it back: its zip-up nylon tops with neon details are modern, particularly when worn under suit jackets. >

Red/black/white knit top, £590, by Prada Knitwear







s a n d r o

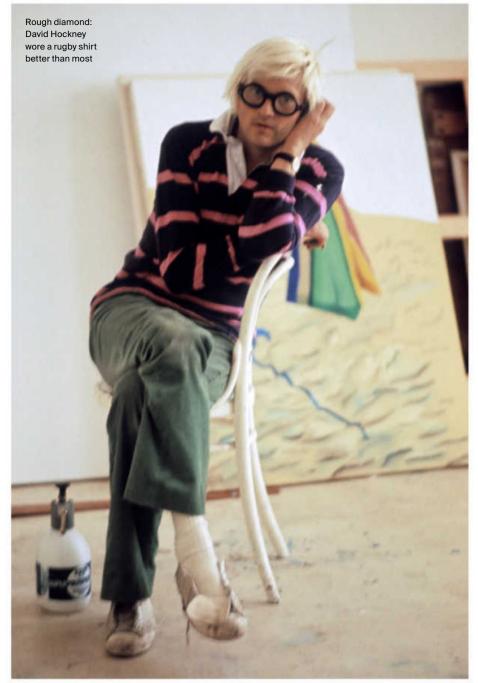
PARIS

SEE THE FILM ON SANDRO-PARIS.COM SPRING/SUMMER 16



SPRING/SUMMER 2016 COLLECTION PENFIELD.COM





DRESS LIKE A PLAYBOY

Summer will see light pyjamastyle suits, bombers, trousers, shirts and shorts everywhere; the look is slouchy and comfy but not scruffy. Gucci and Giorgio Armani suits resemble loungewear in flattering micro patterns, while Louis Vuitton has silk baseball tops and relaxed tracksuit bottoms. Easy.

Blue/white cotton **jacket**, £1,350, by Armani; blue silk **shirt**, £510, by Louis Vuitton; navy silk print **shirt**, £675, by Dolce & Gabbana







PICK A POSH RUGBY TOP

Believe it or not, rugby shirts are back — not cumbersome, branded things in acid shades of lime and magenta, but beautifully cut overshirts in muted shades. The best this season can be found at Alfred Dunhill, Berluti and Gant Diamond G.

Red cotton **shirt**, £840, by Berluti; multicoloured cotton **shirt**, £190, by Alfred Dunhill





→ A few years ago, when I was a rookie fashion editor, myself and the team would have to spend weeks on end, twice a year, visiting designers' showrooms and looking at their latest creations. Much of what they displayed was, of course, delightful, and we would coo and praise accordingly. But there were always a small handful of labels - it would be mean to name and shame them here - whose success we found unfathomable. An enthusiastic public relations assistant would show us the latest collection, and we'd be lost for words. Who on earth could create a pair of shoes like those and think they were either lovely, or wearable? We'd try to hide our sniggers and conjure up a compliment that didn't sound too insincere.

After years of practice, we came up with two that fitted the bill. The most popular adjective we used, which usually left the PR thinking we'd liked what we'd seen, was "very brave". As we stared in awe at a shoe made from multicoloured crocodile skins, embossed with gold snakes and topped with oversized white leather tassels, "very brave" seemed fitting.

The other phrase, more appropriate when confronted with the creator of the controversial item, was, "Wow, the collection was just... so... so you." If paired with a warm smile and a firm handshake, the designer usually looked pleased to hear this.

Fashion compliments don't always travel well, though. What makes sense in the UK doesn't always translate so

Jeremy Langmead

Being brave with fashion can be a double-edged sword

well in Italy. A former colleague of mine, after watching a show by a big Italian label featuring lots of Aran knits, flowing tweed coats and chunky shoes, kissed the designer on both cheeks and cheerfully told him the collection was "very Midsomer Murders". When she tried to explain what the show was about, the designer looked a little puzzled. "Can you please send me the DVDs?" he asked. "We must watch these." Weeks of angst followed as she wondered what the big fashion house made of the box set she'd sent of DCI Tom Barnaby solving endless mysteries involving old ladies found dead at the bottom of their timber-framed staircases.

The reason I mention all this is because the word "brave" can be, as



demonstrated above, a double-edged sword. Brave, when it comes to clothes, can be something quite admirable; but it can also be something wholly awful. There's a fine line, for example, between someone dressing like a dandy or dressing like a dick.

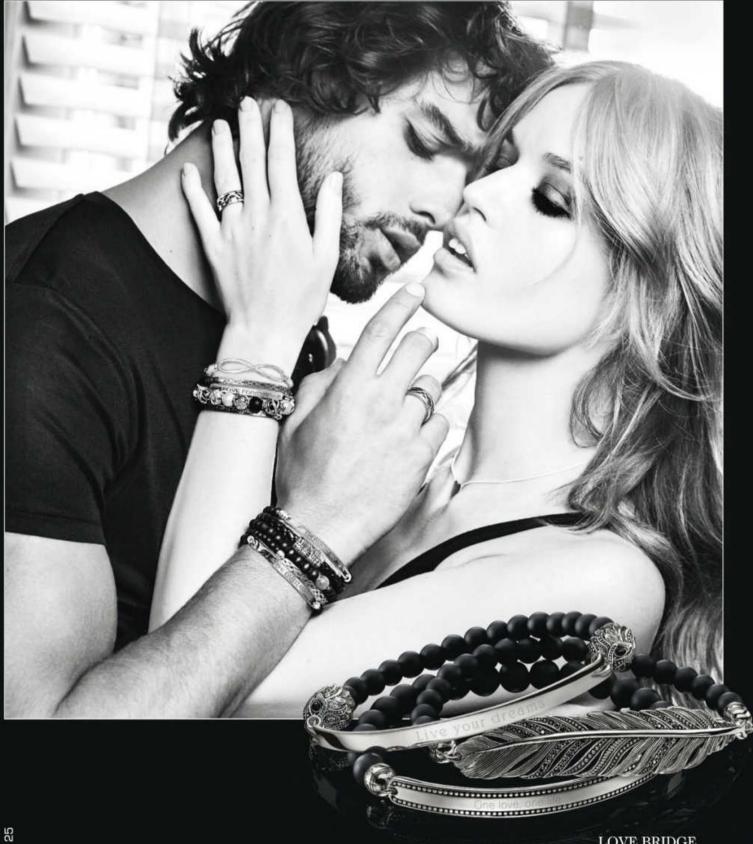
While reading a recent second book of photographs by the artist Peter Schlesinger — a former lover of David Hockney who photographed the bohemian arty-party set of the Sixties and Seventies - I was struck by a picture he'd taken in 1970 of Hockney sitting with Cecil Beaton in the latter's Wiltshire conservatory. Hockney is seated in a wicker chair with his signature mop of peroxide hair and oversized round spectacles, wearing a pastel-pink tweed suit with a big baby blue and brown windowpane check, a brown silk tie with large pink spots and one brick red sock and one emerald green sock. Beaton, meanwhile, is clad in a moss green corduroy suit with a knitted waistcoat and an extravagantly tied lime green silk cravat and matching socks, all topped off with a large-brimmed brown fedora. How marvellous they both look, I thought. Yet imagine the comments from my friends if I wore either of those outfits today. In fact, imagine the sarcastic comments if I only adopted the mismatched socks. Everyone would simply put it down to early-onset Alzheimer's.

What makes brave commendable with dressing is when it feels genuine rather than contrived; when it's part of the personality rather than instead of a personality; when it's a symptom rather than the cause. Hockney's love of colour, shape and convention-breaking was represented in his work, love life and — last and least — his wardrobe. Despite his arresting attire, when Hockney walked into a room it was his success as an artist not the colour of his socks that struck you.

Strangely, as Hilton Als writes in the foreword to Schlesinger's book, the world was a much more open place when his photographs were taken than it is today. You didn't need to be so brave back in 1970 to nip out for a pint of milk wearing an array of mismatched rainbow hues. In 2016, unless you live in Florence or fashionshow tents, you may feel a little self-conscious in an overly eccentric ensemble; you might even find one of the *Esquire* team coming over and telling you how brave you look.

76 Illustration by Mitch Blunt





LOVE BRIDGE

Make memories last –
with your complimentary
engraving.

Thomas Sabo

REBEL AT HEART





Broadcast news: five top digital stations

Nirvana, London

No, not grunge, but rockabilly, ska and "old-school r'n'b".

Share, London

Think *The Apprentice*'s candidates aren't moneyobsessed enough? Try this radio equivalent of the *FT*.

Rock Sport, Scotland

Music with added balls. Plus the odd noisy racket.

Pop Up Radio, UK

Crackles into life for specific events, such as a weekend for London Jazz Festival.

Chill, London

Also broadcasting in the East Midlands (us neither), it's ambient vibes all the way.

And the pick of the web stations...

KEXP, Seattle

Alternative and indie-rock

– the US answer to 6Music.

Ambient Sleeping Pill, New Jersey

Trippy, soothing sounds to help you nod off.

Resonance FM, London

Like an alternative Radio 4, with arts-based talk by day, madly eclectic music by night.

Dublab, LA

A vehicle for DJ experiments. Expect weird mixes and occasional guest star slots.

Earbits, LA

The staff judge submitted tracks, then play the best – not a bad way to hear new sounds.



Russell&Bromley

LONDON



4C SPIDER. PURE ALFA ROMEO.

It's no surprise the Alfa Romeo 4C Spider is turning heads. Beautifully crafted from carbon fibre, aluminium and advanced composites, it's a sports car with both remarkable agility and supercar performance. Weighing less than 1,000 kilograms, it has an exceptional power-to-weight ratio. And with advanced technologies directly inherited from Formula 1 and aerospace it achieves the perfect balance between elegance and engineering and is now ready to order at your local dealer.

La meccanica delle emozioni



THE ACCIDENTAL COOK

The tuck of the Irish

In need of a feel-good dish, Russell Norman cooks a classic stew - don't forget the Guinness



→ God, I hate winter. Every year, when the sun sets on 21 June, I fall into a pit of despond, knowing from that point onwards the days are getting shorter and so begins the inexorable decline towards the darkness. I will usually attempt a quip, something like "the nights are drawing in". No one laughs. When people tell me to "cheer up" and "look on the bright side," or "the summer is still ahead of us," I just can't see it. I'm preoccupied with gloom.

I have a similar problem with half-empty glasses. They are never half-full, I'm afraid. I don't care how happy you are or how positive you feel, their defining quality is emptiness,

'Hearty winter roasts and casseroles warm the bones and soothe the soul'

not fullness. Colleagues, friends and family will persist in trying to convince me otherwise but a halfempty glass is, and always will be, half-empty.

Things don't get any better on 21 December, either. The winter solstice arrives with a little festive cheer, granted, but mostly with portent and the promise of another two months of cold, misery and darkness. It is enough to get you speed-dialling the Samaritans. Winter sucks.

Things start to look up a little in March, but it is such an odd month and it regularly confuses me. I've frozen my tits off in icy winds and three feet of snow, but I have also

Cutting it fine: Russell Norman prepares lamb neck strips for his take on a classic Irish stew, with home-made stock and that all-important combination of two types of potato







walked around Soho in a T-shirt and nursed a sunburnt nose. Psychologically, however, it is the first time in the year when there really does seem to be a sense that salvation is close. Those hearty roasts, slowbraised meats and casseroles that warm the bones and soothe the soul have seen you through the winter wilderness.

Now, there's a date in the middle of the month that gives you occasion for a last hurrah. St Patrick's Day (on 17 March), is perfect for indulging in a pint of Guinness, some rock oysters and a bowl of that peasant masterpiece, Irish stew. Like all good soups, it requires modest preparation and once it's on the stovetop you only need keep half an eye on it.

But despite what many think, Irish stew is not really about the lamb, it's about the spuds. It is, in fact, a tale of two tatties. To make a good Irish stew you must use two contrasting types



'Despite what many think, Irish stew is not all about the lamb — it's about the spuds'

of potato: one floury, the other waxy. The reason for this is that the floury spuds start to disintegrate and add silkiness to the broth while the waxy ones retain their shape to contribute texture and bite. You will need to prepare the stock a day in advance but if you really can't face the bones and the effort, I suppose you could use lamb stock cubes instead (Marco Pierre White tells me they are *all* the rage). Just dissolve them into 1.5 litres of boiling water.

Finally, you need an appropriate beverage. Call me eccentric, but I like a mug of strong tea with my stew. If you're going the full Irish, though, it has to be a flagon of Guinness.

But for feck's sake, make sure it's not half-empty.

Instagram: @Russell Norman Russell's new book Spuntino: Comfort Food (New York Style) is out now, published by Bloomsbury

Irish stew

Serves 4-6

For the stock (make the day before)

- 1kg lamb bones, cut
- 1 large onion, halved
- 1 large carrot, quartered
- 1 stick celery, quartered
- 6 black peppercorns
- Small handful flat parsley, chopped

For the stew

- 1kg lamb neck, cut into chunks
- 500g white floury potatoes (eg, Maris Piper)
- 500g yellow waxy potatoes (eg, Desiree or Charlotte)
- 1kg carrots
- 4 medium onions
- Large knob of butter
- Small handful picked thyme leaves
- Handful chopped fresh chives
- Flaky sea salt

Method

1. For the stock, take a very large saucepan and submerge all the stock ingredients in 3 litres of cold water. Add a very generous pinch of salt, bring to the boil then reduce the heat and simmer, with lid off, for 2hrs. Strain the stock through a sieve, discard the solids and return the liquid to the pan. Bring to a vigorous simmer until the stock has reduced to 1.5 litres. Allow to cool, cover, and store in the fridge.

- 2. Next day, peel the potatoes, cut into bite-sized pieces but keep the two types separate, covered with clean cold water to stop them browning. Peel and cut the carrots into small bites; peel and slice the onions into rings.
- 3. Heat the butter in a very large saucepan and brown the lamb neck. Place the carrots, onions and floury potatoes into the pan, stir a few times and add two or three generous pinches of flaky salt. Add the stock and bring to a steady boil for 10mins, skimming the scum from the surface.
- 4. Reduce the heat to a hearty simmer and continue to stir occasionally for a further 15mins. Now add the waxy potatoes and simmer for 20mins. Add the thyme, stir, cover firmly and take off the heat. Wait 20mins before you remove the lid, stir again, serve and scatter over the chopped chives.













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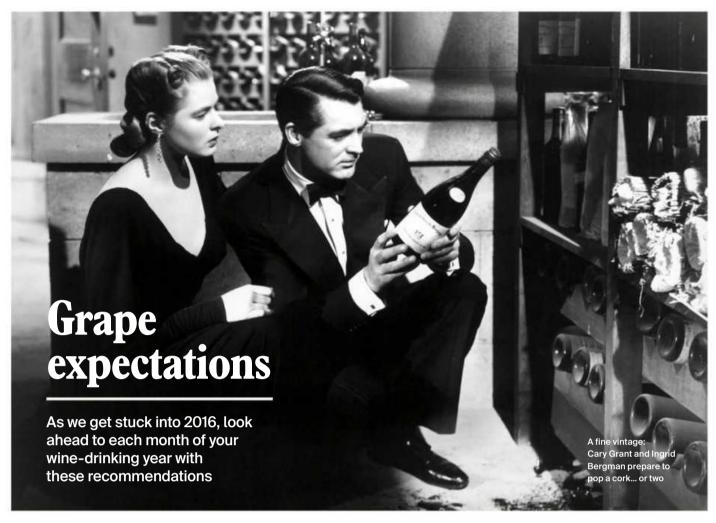


Words by Will Hersey 91

TATEOSSIAN



MONTECARLO SILVER AND ALUTEX BRACELETS GEAR TRIO MECHANICAL CUFFLINKS





Berry Bros & Rudd X Paul Smith Good Ordinary White 2014 (limited edition), £53.10 for six bottles

For the month of St Valentine, double Royal Warrant-holders Berry Bros & Rudd's affordable own-brand wines have had their labels colourfully spiced up by designer Sir Paul Smith. bbr.com



LDN Cru Cabernet Sauvignon 2014, £20

London's first and to date only winery produces a clean and robust Cab Sav that should go perfectly with your Easter roast lamb. *londoncru.co.uk*



Ramey Chardonnay, Woolsey Road, Russian River Valley 2012, £47.50

Put the days of anti-Chardonnay snobbery behind you and edge into spring with this elegantly sharp Californian offering. bbr.com



Gut Oggau, Timotheus, Burgenland, Austria 2014, £32

Our pick of the natural wines at this month's Raw Wine Fair. Gut Oggau's Timotheus is made without using insecticides or additives, but it's still "rich and opulent", says the fair's founder, Isabelle Legeron MW. rawfair.com

)



Domaine Rolly-Gassmann Riesling de Rorschwihr Cuvée Yves 2012, £22

With spring turning to summer, this beautifully perfumed Alsatian Riesling will make the ideal partner to the season's abundance of oysters and shellfish. bbr.com



Miraval Rosé Côtes de Provence 2014, £18

As the temperatures rise, your wine needs to be bright, refreshing and not too sickly. From Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie's estate, this Provençal rosé boasts delicate fruit and floral flavours, with just a hint of salt. 31dover.com



Campos de Cima Viognier 2014, £14

With Rio Olympics fever breaking out, a taste of Brazil is in order. From the UK's only dedicated importer of Brazilian varieties, try this characteristically vibrant Viognier. southamericanwinesonline.co.uk



Mastrojanni Brunello di Montalcino 2010, £63

Sommeliers were in raptures when these warm, smooth Tuscan wines were released last year. If you can't nab one, the winemakers have taken the hint for 2011's batch. honestgrapes.co.uk





Pelee Island Vidal Icewine 2006, £46.50 (37.5cl)

If you're after something sweet, try an icewine. Made from frozen grapes, it's light and fresh, while retaining honeyed tones well-matched to cheese and fruity puddings. hedonism.co.uk





Pierneef Syrah-Viognier 2013, £17

For the colder weather, you'll need something spicy and deep to warm the cockles. Surprisingly soft on the tongue, this blends two superb South African grapes and is ideal with red meats. capreo.com





Ruinart Blanc de Blancs NV, £60

From the oldest Champagne house, this pale fizz is made to impress over Christmas and New Year. Clean and bright on the palate, rounded in style and very easy to quaff; the 18th century-style

bottle looks fantastic, too. majestic.co.uk

Jan '17



Sandeman 30-Year-Old Tawny Port. £55

Remember the mistake of this year's "dry January" and fortify next year's greyest month with a sophisticated, after-dinner port aged in oak. This tastes of sweet dried fruits with a note of vanilla. leaandsandeman.co.uk



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FOR THE OUTER FABRIC AND SEAMS, GUARANTEEING IMPROVED WATERPROOFNESS AND BREATHA-BILITY COMPARED TO COMMON LAMINATION TECHNIQUES. DETACHABLE HOOD WITH AIR VENTS.
DIAGONAL POCKETS WITH ZIP FASTENING. ADJUSTABLE STRAP AT CUFFS. ZIP FASTENING.











The workout

This circuit of five exercises is designed to improve the fitness you need for a real MMA fight. Perform each one for 60 secs then move on to the next without stopping. This will replicate a real UFC round. Rest for one minute then repeat 3–5 times.

1 | The punch

Take a light dumbbell (1–3kg) in each hand and assume a boxing stance, before throwing continuous straight punches.

2 | The kick

You'll need a heavy bag (see above). Repeatedly throw low, right leg kicks, rotating your hips as much as possible for extra power. Switch over to the left leg after 30secs.

3 | The sprawl

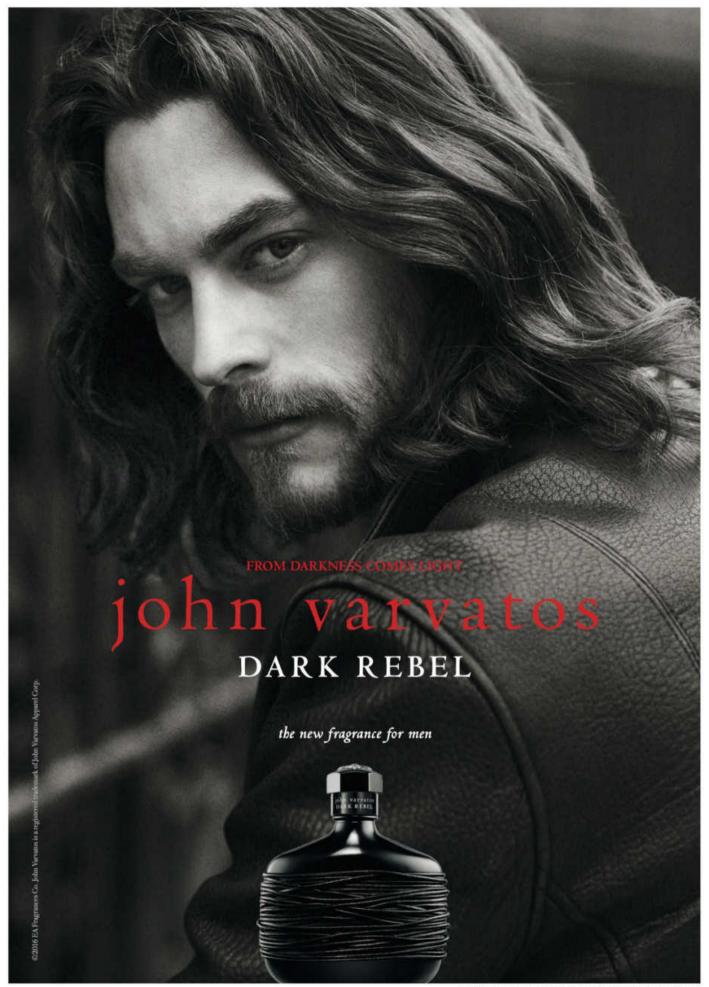
When you get knocked down, you need to be able to spring back up again, so do 60secs of burpees. This is a killer!

4 | The cardio

Simple but effective.
Using the rope,
skip on the spot for
a full minute, keeping
as light on your toes as
you can. This improves
agility and stamina
— essential assets
in any fight.

5 | The takedown

ective. Go back to the bag and let all hell break loose on full attack mode. Punch, kick toes as and knee the bag non-stop until the final bell rings (you'll have to bring your own bell...)



VIEW THE FILM AT JOHNVARVATOS.COM/DARKREBEL



A laptop that erases borders, starting with the display.

It's the world's smallest 13-inch laptop, but that's only the beginning. With the Intel® Core™ processors, Windows 10, a virtually borderless InfinityEdge display with an UltraSharp™ Quad HD+ option, and amazing battery life, XPS 13 is designed to outperform the competition in every category.

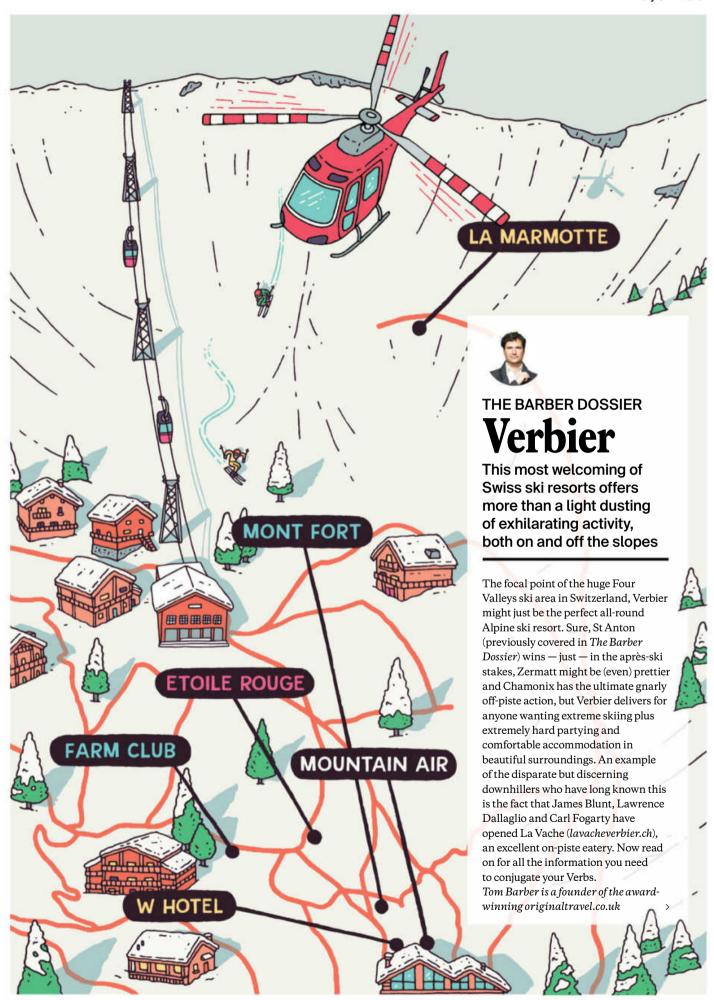
Find out more about the new XPS 13 at Dell.co.uk/XPS13 or search for Dell XPS.



The new XPS 13. Includes an Intel® Core™ processor

Intel Inside®. Extraordinary Performance Outside.





Stay >

The arrival in 2013 of the W Hotel upped the ante in Verbier, but this remains a private-hire sort of place with an array of luxurious chalets at prices to match. Expect branded vehicles and smoking-hot chalet girls as a given, then work up the pay grades past wine cellars and private cinemas to pools, spas and into multiple tens of thousands of pounds weekly rates. wverbier.com

When in...

Rent a sledge: take a bus to the Carrefour restaurant (lecarrefour. ch) and walk 20 minutes to cosy La Marmotte on the Savoleyres slopes. Enjoy a slap-up Savoyard spread (raclette, fondue) and bottle of red (breaks down the cheese, blah, blah) before a sledging experience more intense than batting against the Aussies, all the way back into town. lamarmotte-verbier.com

Lunch →

At Chez Dany, a pretty chalet tucked away in the hamlet of Chambin. Sit on the sun-soaked terrace taking in the beautiful view, and delicious food like the Alpine classic croute au fromage — bread, melted cheese and ham topped with a fried egg — and surprisingly good Swiss wine, before weaving back down to the Medran station in the town centre.

Drink

Just up from the Medran, Mont Fort is the closest Verbier gets to an actual proper pub, and is a favoured après-ski haunt for instructors and chalet girls to slag off (good-humouredly, of course) their hedge fund clientele. Dancing in ski boots is obligatoire. pubmontfort.com





Get there

Another feather in Verbier's cap is its accessibility; just two hours from Geneva Airport, which is served by BA, Swiss and EasyJet. gva.ch/en

Avoid

Developing a noticeable "punter's gap", the telltale red rectangular strip of sunburn on one-week-only skiers' foreheads caused by the gap between goggles and helmet. Novices' mistake.

Party

The ultimate toss up between the old — in the form of Farm Club, 45 years old and still going strong, some would say stronger than many of the more senior clientele — and the new, at Carve in the W Hotel, which is shiny and pretty both in design and in the massed ranks on the dance floor. hotelnevai.com/farm-club; carve-verbier.ch

Do

Tackle Mont Gelé. Ride the cable car to the 3,023m summit, survey the epic scene and take the plunge, either down one of the marked *itinéraires* or, if you rate your chances, into one of the infamous couloirs. Taking a guide is strongly recommended.

Dine ←

Verbier's hip new dining spot is supper club Etoile Rouge, from the team behind old favourite Le Rouge. The decor is baroque bling, the food a Scandinavian/Russian mash-up (try Kamchatka crab and caviar) and the poison – naturally – a parade of vodkas and aquavits, enjoyed before the DJ cranks up the volume and the party kicks off. etoilerouge.club

Shop

Having "all the gear and no idea" means instant social death in Verbier's hard-skiing circles. While it takes years to get the idea, a quick trip to Mountain Air should see you sorted for the gear, from skins to avalanche airbags. mountainairverbier.com



Why now? ←

Because the Freeride World Tour rolls into town from 2–10 April with the rugged Swatch Xtreme Verbier, the tour finale. See the world's best freeride skiers and boarders vie to master Verbier's baddest backcountry to be World Champ. freerideworldtour.com

See

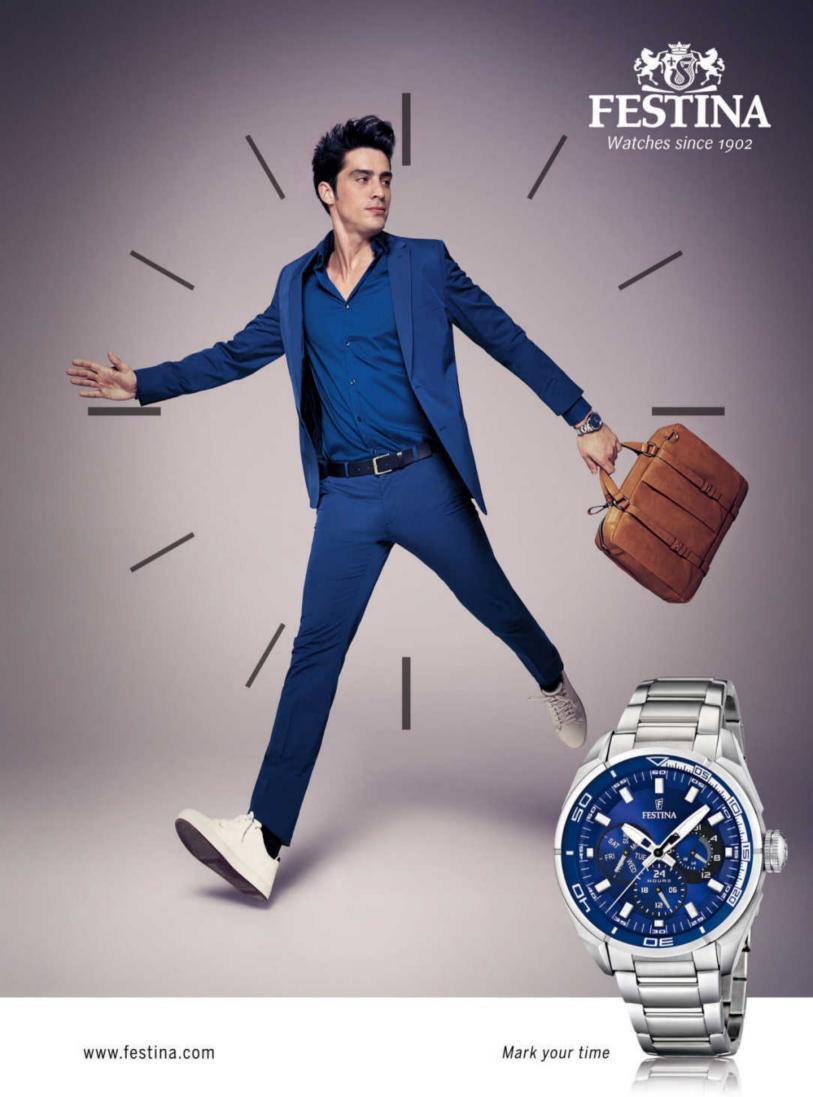
...where you're heading in a whiteout by skiing in the Bruson forest run (its pines give terrain orientation in bad weather). Formerly a well-kept secret, the area is now within easy reach via a new gondola system, and carving through the powderfilled forests is magical.



Find out just how good the numbers look. Visit: mitsubishi-cars.co.uk to find your nearest dealer

1. For more information visit www.mitsubishi-cars.co.uk/outlander/plug-in-cai-grant 2. Official EU MPG test figure shown as a guide for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results, 3, 32 mile EV range achieved with full battery charge, 541 miles achieved with combined full battery and petrol tank. Actual range will vary depending on driving style and road conditions. 4. Domestic plug charge; 5 hours, 16 Amp home charge points; 3.5 hours, 80% rapid charge; 30mins, 5. Government subsidised charge points are available from a number of suppliers for a small fee - ask your dealer for more information, 6. Congestion Charge application required, subject to administrative fee, 7, 5% BIK compared to the average rate of 25%, 5% BIK rate for the 2015/16 tax year. 8. Prices shown include the Government Plug-in Car Grant on Lard VAT (at 20%), but exclude First Registration Fee. Model shown is an Outlander PHEV GX4hs at £35,999 including the Government Plug-in Car Grant Dead prices range from £29,304 to £40,554 and include VED, First Registration Fee and the Government Plug-in Car Grant please visit www.gov.uk/plug-in-car-van-grants. The Government Plug-in Car Grant please visit www.gov.uk/plug-in-car-van-grants.

Outlander PHEV range fuel consumption in mpg (ltrs/100km): Full Battery Charge: no fuel used, Depleted Battery Charge: 51.4mpg (5.5), Weighted Average: 156.9mpg (1.8), CO₂ emissions: 42 g/km.





1 | Stone Island THE REFLECTIVE BOMBER

Technical fabric pioneer Stone Island has cut this bomber from iridescent nylon metal fabric, and printed it with a resin full of glass microspheres. Seriously.

£550, stoneisland.com



2 | CP Company THE WINDBREAKER

CP Company is another big player when it comes to forward-thinking fabrics.
This windbreaker is light and unlined, and just the thing for that tricky inter-season weather.

£425, cpcompany.co.uk

3 | Baracuta **THE HOODED HARRINGTON**

Every man should have a Harrington of some sort in his wardrobe and few make this staple piece of casualwear better than Baracuta.

£280,baracuta.com





4 | Timberland THE QUILTED COAT

When it comes to a quilted coat, swerve the oversized, corduroy-collared, and opt for a bold colour and flattering cut, like this Timberland creation.

£125, timberlandonline.co.uk



ORLEBAR BROWN



SINCE IT WAS FOUNDED IN SWITZERLAND IN 1881, MOVADO HAS EARNED MORE THAN 100 PATENTS AND 200 INTERNATIONAL AWARDS FOR ARTISTRY AND INNOVATION IN WATCH DESIGN AND TIME TECHNOLOGY. THIS RICH HERITAGE OF INNOVATION CONTINUES TO DEFINE THE MOVADO BRAND AND TO DISTINGUISH ITS LATEST WATCH DESIGNS, CELEBRATED FOR THEIR CLEAN, MODERN AESTHETIC.



5 | Pretty Green THE PARKA

Sleek but handsomely detailed, this parka should be worn with super-slim jeans, desert boots and a look of angsty nihilism.

£165, prettygreen.com



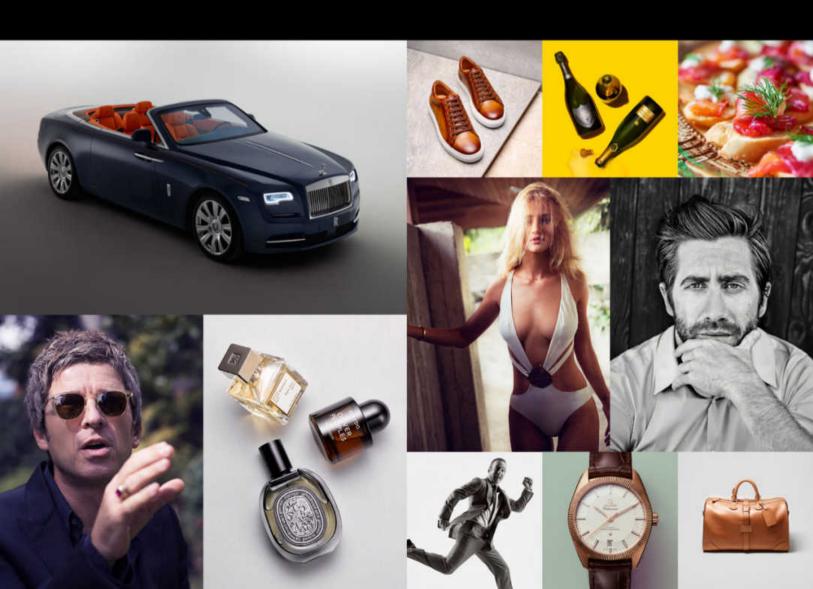
Esquire

Our up-to-the-minute edit of the very best in style, gear, culture, food and drink

+

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esquire.co.uk



Mario Testino

The photographer focuses on life's essentials

1/Style

Jeans: Acne. Burberry or Theory. Shoes: Ferragamo moccasins.

Suit: Burberry. Shirt: Versace.

Boxer shorts: That's a personal

question. Scarf: Burberry

Hat: I used to wear hats but I don't any more. The world has become

too warm.



2 / People

Style icon: I always loved how David Bowie challenged tradition.

Artist: Too many to name one. Maybe Urs Fischer (Your Problem, 2015, pictured below) or Richard Prince.

Musician: Grace Jones. Film star: I just worked with Kristen

Stewart, she's amazing. Muse: Kate Moss.

3 / Grooming

Fragrance: Bleu de Chanel. Shaving foam: Kiss My Face. Shower gel: Clarins.

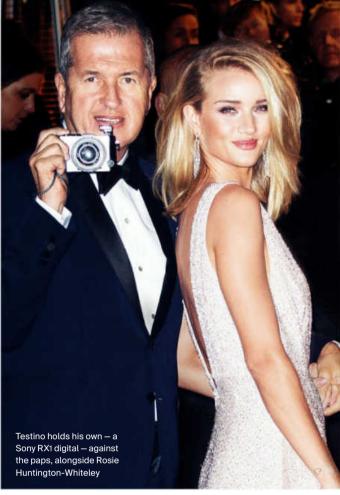
Face wash: I never wash my face

with soap.

Shampoo: I never wash my hair with shampoo, either.

Hair product: I've tried to use them. but I'm not very good with those things. Barber: I'm lucky because hairdressers

are with me all the time.



4 / Travel

Hometown: Well. I feel like I've been on a plane for the last 20 years. I go between Sydney, Paris, London, LA, New York, Lima, Rio and Berlin, with a little bit of Madrid and Barcelona. At the moment I would love to live in Peru

Destination: Ibiza or LA. Hotel: The Copacabana Palace in Rio de Janeiro.

5 / Tools

Car: Range Rover.

Bicycle: A rental, depending on wherever I am.

Watch: I don't wear watches -I never have.

App: Instagram - the National graphic account is very exciting.

Website: Mine (mariotestino.com). Gadget: Camera. I hide behind

them a lot.





Phone: iPhone

Laptop: Mac.

Camera: I use 100 different cameras. Sound system: Oh God, I'm so

un-technical.



Chair: Karl Springer

Bed linen: I have it all made in Peru. Lamp: My obsession - I go to Rewire in Los Angeles.

Pets: None... and I wouldn't like any.

8 / Food and drink

Wine: Château Margaux.

Bordeaux. Also wines from the

Douro in Portugal.

Spirit: I like pisco sours, but a whisky sour is a good replacement. I also drink Ciroc vodka.

Beer: Please, don't be ridiculous. Dish: Lomo saltado, or chicken vindaloo - as hot as they can make it.

Snack: Devils on horseback. Restaurant: The Malabar, Notting

Hill. London. Bar: Tragaluz, at the Miraflores Park

Hotel, Lima, Peru.

Club: The Marina, Lima, Peru.







THE FRAGRANCE FOUNDATION

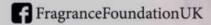
National Fragrance Day

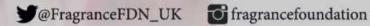
Monday 21st March 2016

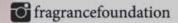


#ScentMemories

Your stories through scent...









Ralph Lauren, Tommy Hilfiger, Brooks Brothers and Gant. The latter label, which was founded in Connecticut in the Fifties, has become synonymous with understated Americana due to the button-down Oxford shirts and leather boat shoes that have long been at the core of its clothing.

For spring/summer 2016, Gant ties a new rope to its mast. Where, for the past few decades, the brand has sold sturdy yachting gear to the Hamptons set in its Gant Mainline (now Gant Originals) collection, and slimmer preppy garb to a younger customer with Gant Rugger, now it is introducing Gant Diamond G.



Gant Originals

Gant Diamond G

Conceived as a mid-point between the sports-ready leisurewear of the Originals and the weekend-ready Gant Rugger line, Diamond G is aimed squarely at young professionals who, says Gant CEO Patrik Nilsson, want a wardrobe that can take them "from desk to dinner, with an edge of European sophistication".

"We realised that there are a lot of people who love Gant as a brand, but they want to wear Gant to work," Nilsson says. "The first Gant Diamond G collection is very small and packable. It fits with any wardrobe and is very style-driven. You could mix these clothes with anything from Originals or Rugger and you'd never come out looking like a clown. The simple colours and beautiful fabrics we've chosen are part of our DNA. With more colour this would have looked preppier, but we wanted to keep it sophisticated."

These pages show our pick of the collection, which is available now. gant.co.uk



Illustration by Mark Oliver

Time keeper.



¹stop2go↓

2 SECONDS TO REMEMBER.

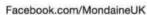
As the clock seen on all Swiss railway stations, the Mondaine stop2go Official Swiss Railways Watch runs a little fast for 58 seconds, then stops for 2 seconds at the full minute. Mondaine 58-02 Quartz Movement, Stainless Steel Case, Sapphire Crystal, Water Resistant, individually numbered, Swiss Made - what do 2 seconds mean to you?

Unmistakable face. Distinctive hands. Undeniably Swiss. The renowned Official Swiss Railways Clock skilfully reproduced as a watch.

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THE MACKLIN REGIME

Well travelled

Tom Macklin applauds the hedonism-free holiday

→ Everyone wants to relax, de-stress and reinvigorate when on holiday. A trend for calmer breaks focusing on fitness and wellbeing has emerged — bespoke alternatives to beach holidays or city breaks, with benefits to help achieve your physical and mental peak. Long-term paybacks include greater understanding of your body, more easily achieved fitness goals and more efficient work performance. If you're contemplating a healthier holiday this year, *Esquire* has chosen four retreats to have on your radar.







1 | Elevate mindfulness Soul & Surf

If your primary aim is to eradicate stress with deep relaxation, this Sri Lankan operation is for you. At dawn, ride waves on the island's south coast to wake the senses — if you've never surfed, instructors will teach the skills. Fill your days with yoga, Esalen massage, meditation and ocean float-therapy and you'll never want to fly back to the daily grind. From £775pp pw.

soulandsurf.com/retreats/sri-lanka



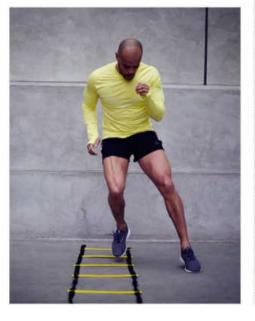
2 | Outdoor adventures Asanox

Need to escape the urban jungle and reconnect with your primitive side? Asanox offers military-style expeditions amid stunning rural landscapes in Scotland. Wales and France to reinvigorate the senses, acquire knowledge and test physical and mental capabilities. Whether climbing Ben Nevis, learning survival skills or taking on the original WWII commando/ special forces training ground, you'll build stamina, concentration power, and be rewarded with group bonding events each evening. From £615pp. asanox.com



3 | Body awareness The Jameson Retreat

Esquire's PT Harry Jameson (right) leads fitness experts and medics to help you understand your body. To avoid injury and maximise results, a clinical analysis by Viavi of Harley Street establishes your capabilities, food tolerances and stress levels. Then your three-step programme takes place over a week in Dubai (with five weeks' UK aftercare). £8,500pp. elegantresorts.co.uk



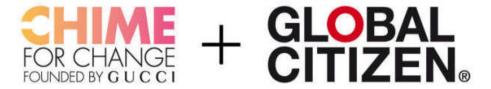




4 | Achieving physical peak Pop-Up Fitness

Personal trainer Olivia Cooney offers bespoke boot camps at luxury Ibiza and South of France villas. Maximising the picturesque landscapes, you will start the day with a 7:30am cross-country run followed by kettle bell and TRX boot camps, core work, boxing, battle ropes, yoga or hiking. Best of all, you won't need to lift a finger in-between; a qualified nutritionist provides meals while sport and grooming treatments are given in your room. From £1,850pp. pop-up.fitness

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www.townandcountrymag.co.uk

A footwear foursome of fresh styles, from robust boots to luxury loafers

02 Whistles

Your new high street Buddy

Whistles began producing menswear towards the end of 2014 and has continued to impress since. In a smart move, the brand has joined forces with Japanese cult label Buddy to create a seven-piece capsule collection of footwear and accessories. As you might expect from such a collaboration, the resulting products are sleek, simple and designed with function in mind. The slick, white suede Willow sneakers (right) are a standout.

Willow white suede sneakers, £150, by

Whistles X Buddy

whistles.com

01 William & Son X Grenson

Best of British - a stiff upper

Fred dark brown leather brogue **boots**,

£495, by William

& Son X Grenson

williamandson.com

Mayfair jeweller and gentlemen's outfitter William & Son has recently enlisted the help of British shoemakers Grenson to create a special two-shoe (one's for girls, sadly) collection. A reimagining of the Northamptonshire company's famous Fred brogue boots and crafted from deep brown Horween leather, it represents a modest alteration, but one that's yielded seriously handsome results. Goodyear-welted and handmade "from skin to box" in the Grenson factory, the boots are unlikely to be bettered for seeing out the winter.

03 **Hugo Boss** Made in Italy collection

European union takes a step forward

It's well known that if you want the best leather goods, go to Italy. Which is exactly what German megabrand Hugo Boss has done for its new collection of men's accessories. Business bags are made in Florence from cowhide and constructed in such a way that they are lightweight and waterproof, while the more casual holdalls are cut from soft calf leather. In addition, there are seven footwear styles including an elegant loafer (above right) - all made at the Hugo Boss factory in Morrovalle near Italy's eastern coast. Available at the new Boss UK flagship store, Regent Street, London W1B 5TW

04 Jones Bootmaker The new game of Jones

There are countless quality gems to be found at the affordable end of the shopping scale. Established in 1857, Jones Bootmaker has been making very good, inexpensive footwear for a long time, and we highly recommend dropping in to a store this spring. Its new collection features several standout designs such as the Layham tasselled loafer (£90), the Keeble brogue derby (£90) and the Prestworld double monk (left), all of which are astonishingly good value.

Prestworld dark brown leather double monk-strap shoes, £150, by Jones Bootmaker nesbootmaker.coi



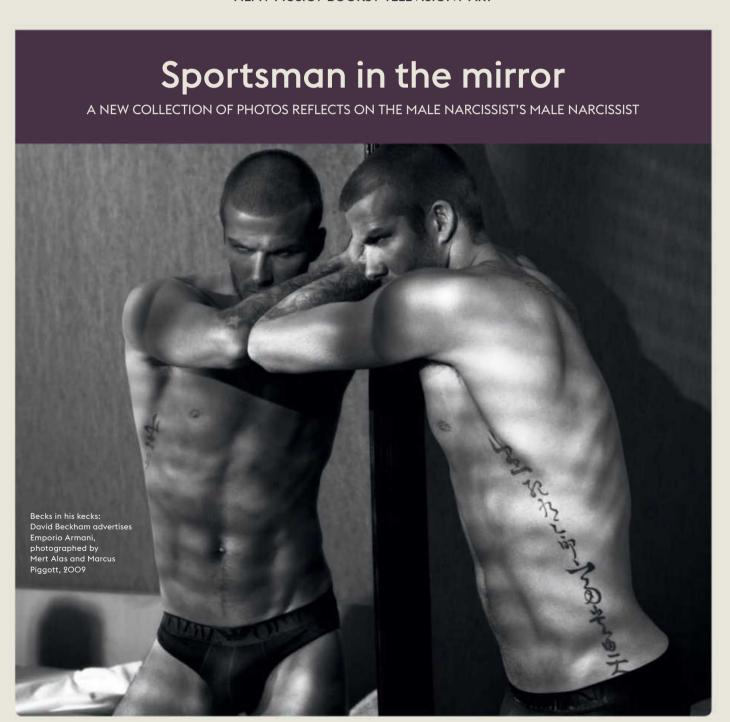
BLACK BOOK

AMERICAN STYLE SPECIAL **ON SALE 17 MARCH**



Culture

FILM / MUSIC / BOOKS / TELEVISION / ART



Below: Beckham photographed by Vincent Peters for the cover of *The Face*, 2001

→ In July, it will be 25 years since a 16-year-old David Beckham signed trainee terms with Manchester United. As we know, he went on to become not only a useful footballer but one of the most photographed men on the planet, and perhaps the most potent symbol of masculine narcissism in the age of masculine narcissism. Beckham's image, and how it has been used and interpreted, is as crucial an element in his story as any goal (even the one for England against Greece), assist, transfer, fragrance range or tattoo.

This month, an auction of original photos, preceded by a two-week public viewing, at Phillips auction house in central London, will raise money for Beckham's Unicef fund, and showcase the best of his portraits by leading photographers and artists.

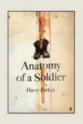
New work has been commissioned from Damien Hirst, Nadav Kander and Tracey Emin. Annie Leibovitz, Steven Klein, Peter Lindbergh and 20 others also provide shots. Beckham likes taking pics, too. He is the most popular British man on Instagram (34th in the world; 18.2m followers), despite having retired from the game nearly three years ago, and he has said that his eldest boy Brooklyn is more passionate about being a photographer than being a footballer.

David Beckham: the Man runs from 27 February–10 March, Phillips, 30 Berkeley Square, London WIJ



Interesting POV

CLEAR THE FIELD FOR THE BEST BRITISH WAR NOVEL IN YEARS



Captain Harry Parker lost both his legs to a Helmand province IED in 2009 and had a quarter-hour of fame carrying the Paralympic Torch in 2012 at the behest of Prince Harry. Anatomy of a Soldier, Parker's first book, will further his notability, because it has every chance of being the best British war novel of its generation.

Each of the book's 45 chapters tells the story of Captain Tom Barnes from the point of

view of an object in his immediate and tangential orbits. It's a gimmick that might have killed the narrative stone dead, but Parker's retelling of a soldier's life from the POV of, for example, night vision goggles, weapons, Barnes' mother's handbag and the fake Nikes of a boy insurgent, is stark and superb.

The things aren't given voices or opinions; instead they report dispassionately from fresh and interesting angles. Your mind's eye

zooms straight to each one as it's revealed, causing a laser-like focus on the action. The page-and-a-half passage in which an explosion explains its effect on a man — "I crushed him against gravity" — is as impressively, brutally pyrotechnic as any Hollywood VFX. A mighty achievement.

Anatomy of a Soldier (Faber & Faber) is out on 3 March



Gang star: Kate Winslet plays Irene, of the Russian-Jewish mafia, aka "kosher nostra", in *Triple 9*

3

27 reasons to watch Triple 9

DIRECTOR JOHN HILLCOAT ON HIS MOBSTER-HEIST-GOES-WRONG THRILLER

It's increasingly tough to make a good crime movie, because writers and directors are stretching out such stories to make TV series. The Australian director John Hillcoat says he's also looking to make something for small screens. That would be cinema's loss, judging by his stunning new movie, Triple 9. Starring Chiwetel Ejiofor, Casey Affleck, Woody Harrelson and Kate Winslet, it is full of genuine surprises, and not everyone you expect to survive is alive at the end (and vice versa). There's a clue in the title to one of the film's turning points - 999 is US police code for "officer down". Hillcoat, whose previous films include The Proposition (2005), The Road (2009) and Lawless (2012), spoke to Esquire from Los Angeles.

Why did you make Triple 9?

Having loved gritty films from the Seventies like *The French Connection*, with one foot in reality and one foot in genre, I wanted to find a contemporary crime thriller in the same vein. Hence exploring the criminal





'Some of the Latino gang guys in the movie are the real deal — retired members'

landscape in America, where the Russian-Jewish mafia are on top—there is no one that gets near them. I did a lot of research.

Did you talk to any bad guys?

Yes, and the FBI. Some of the Latino gang guys in the movie are the real deal — retired members. It would have been too dangerous to have men from two gangs there if they were still active. The Russians are on top but controlling the streets, because of drugs, are the Latino cartels.

What surprised you most in your research? The stakes just keep getting raised on both sides of the law enforcement divide; the militarisation of the police keeps pace with that of the criminals. In Atlanta, Georgia [where Triple 9 was shot], all police are given Swat training. They have huge tanks. In fact, in the scene where we have a police tank, that one is a fraction of the size of the real ones they use. Logistically, we couldn't get

This is the first of your feature films not to

the big one they use.



be scored by Nick Cave. Are you still friends? We're very close. He really wanted to do this but I wanted a specific sound, drawing on hip-hop and electronic music, music from the streets of America. He understood. He said it would be like asking him to do a reggae score.

Triple 9 is out on 19 February



Shadow player: Tom Hiddleston as Jonathan Pine in the BBC's new drama The Night Manager



Hiddleston goes to 'the circus'

THE BBC'S NEW LE CARRÉ DRAMA LETS A GREAT BRITISH VILLAIN PLAY THE GOOD GUY

One of the many good things going for The Night Manager, a six-part thriller based on the John le Carré novel of the same name, is unfiltered Tom Hiddleston. He is, of course, a world-famous movie star, thanks to his turn as Loki in The Avengers and two Thor films. After that, he's been most visible as Henry V for the BBC and a centuries-old bloodsucker in Jim Jarmusch's Only Lovers Left Alive. Highly watchable in all, he was nonetheless being viewed through the lenses of supervillainy, Shakespeare and vampirism. In The Night Manager, he's plain Jonathan Pine, former soldier and nocturnal overseer of a Cairo hotel, whose only costume is his sharp suit and whose superpower is unfailing politeness. It's a treat to see him this way.

It is no spoiler to learn that Pine is soon drawn into the shady world of espionage. Viewers are likely to find themselves similarly hooked, as was Hiddleston himself when he was pitched the project.

"I think John le Carré occupies a unique position in British literature and storytelling," Hiddleston says. "He has a singular authority on the subject matter, having been in 'the circus' himself, as they call it. I think he is a master of his art, the espionage thriller. I think the reason any actor would be drawn to an adaptation of his material, as I was, is that his characters are incredibly complex, incredibly rich, as surprising and contradictory as real people are. They are also just great stories."

The Night Manager is a particularly good yarn, with further superb turns from Hugh Laurie as an arms dealer and Olivia Colman as a dogged intelligence officer. The show was filmed on location in Switzerland, Mallorca and Marrakech, and the twist-filled penultimate episode, with an arms bazaar at a mercenary camp, should preclude the inevitable question, "Why can't we Brits do TV drama as well as the Americans?" In fact, with The Honourable Woman in 2014 and London Spy last year, the Beeb is on a roll of top-drawer thriller mini-series, which The Night Manager extends in style.

The Night Manager starts on BBC One at the end of February



Laid-back charm: Foxes (below right) models a denim catsuit. In rollerskates, obviously

Ahead of the pack

FOXES IS BACK HUNTING HITS WITH HER SECOND ALBUM

Timing is everything, as any musician will tell you, and for Louisa Allen, aka Foxes, the time to make her second album — difficult enough at the best of times, cliché has it — came when she was a little out of sorts.

"I was feeling more hurt than I'd ever been before," says the 26-year-old from Southampton, who has also modelled in Vogue and for H&M, "so the album's very emotional. I didn't expect that."

All I Need is the follow-up to her 2014 debut, Glorious, which spawned three top 20 singles. She began the year with a Grammy for her vocal on "Clarity", by the DJ/producer Zedd — one of those EDM bangers that earworms you even if you never listen to dance music — and ended it with a jazz-blues version of Queen's "Don't Stop Me Now", recorded for an episode of Doctor Who set on a future Orient Express, a terrible notion on paper but really the loveliest next three minutes you will spend on YouTube.

In between came a support slot on Pharrell Williams' European arena tour, which she secured after he heard her cover of "Happy" on Radio 1. Then last year, she



Foxes set a world record, playing seven UK cities in 12 hours to promote the first single

set a Guinness world record by playing seven UK cities in 12 hours to promote "Body Talk", the first single from *All I Need*.

This year, she embarks on a less frenetic headline tour playing the new songs, which are a moodier, meaner upgrade of the pop tracks that helped make her name.

Sadly, the hurt with which she forged them caused her to disregard one important consideration: "I don't know how I'm going to sing these songs live, actually."

All I Need is out on 5 February; Foxes tours the UK and Ireland from 23 February-12 March

Jokers wild

COMEDY OVERLORD JUDD APATOW SHOWS HIS ALL-TIME HEROES SOME LOVE



Judd Apatow is a man who has known comedy all his life. Long before he established the creative network that begat Freaks and Geeks (1999–2000), Anchorman: the Legend of Ron Burgundy (2004), and Girls (2012–), Apatow was a committed comedy nerd.

As a teenager, he parlayed a job at his high-school radio station into the chance to interview his idols, including Jerry Seinfeld, Jay Leno and Garry Shandling. Now, these

conversations, and new interviews, have been collected in a book, Sick in the Head: Conversations About Life and Comedy.

Apatow has coaxed friends and idols alike into candid, unguarded discussions, including Mel Brooks on political correctness, Louis CK on drugs and Amy Schumer on sex.

Meanwhile, over on Netflix, Apatow is the co-creator of *Love*, a modern-relationships IO-parter that is frank and very funny

throughout. Sample dialogue: "This weekend... every time I want to go smoke weed, I do I5 push-ups. Every time I want to masturbate, I'm gonna do 2O sit-ups. That way, by the end of the weekend I'll be totally ripped and I'll get high on self-esteem."

Love is on Netflix from 19 February. Sick in the Head: Conversations About Life and Comedy (Random House) is out on 10 March

Pulling through: Martin McCann (below) plays a survivor forced to grow his own in dystopian thriller movie *The Survivalist*

Lone wolf in the wild

TENSE BRITFLICK THE SURVIVALIST PROPOSES AN INTIMATE TAKE ON THE POST-APOCALYPSE

As a way of pointing out the ingenuity of a man alone in a bleak, dystopian future, showing him fertilise precious seedlings with his own precious seed is eye-poppingly original. With several more brutally stark moments, *The Survivalist* becomes something even more surprising: a fresh and gripping take on the post-apocalyptic survival story.

We never see or hear about the events that lead to a man (Martin McCann) living alone in a forest shack, laying traps for animals and tripwires for intruders who might steal his supplies, reap his crops or worse. He makes wild mushroom soup, has top-and-tail washes with collected rainwater and tends his plants; as well as the onanistic horticulture, he fertilises the soil with decomposing human bodies. His constant companion: a shotgun and its last two shells.

Then two women arrive. The elder (Olwen Fouéré) offers him seeds in return for shelter; that not being enough, she offers the younger (Mia Goth), her daughter, and that seals the deal. Alliances form and plots are hatched, some surprising. The gun and the

As the hook of a book's opening

segment, a Batman murdering a Spider-

Man at a fathers-seeking-justice protest

is about as page-turning as they come.

In Mick Herron's espionage thriller Real

Tigers, there are more heroic struggles,

heist in an intelligence service storage

facility underneath a west London

industrial estate that lasts for about

less-heroic failures and a shoot-out-cum-



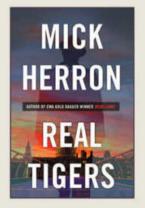
ammo come into play in a couple of unflashy but incredibly tense action sequences.

The Survivalist arrives almost exactly as The Walking Dead strides on into the second, eight-episode half of its sixth series. The budget of one instalment of that show is about twice that of this movie, and that the film does not suffer in comparison is due mainly to its debut writer-director, Northern Irishman Stephen Fingleton.

There is none of the moralising that bogs down many post-apocalypse plots: here,

years after whatever it was that collapsed civilisation, what's got to be done just gets done. And those suffering from zombie fatigue will be pleased to learn there's no undead in this particular future. It's no spoiler to say that the ending, with only a hint of resolution, is far from happy — reason again, in the case of this taut little thriller, to be cheerful.

The Survivalist is in cinemas and on demand from 12 February



Twisted tale of real intelligence

SECOND ESPIONAGE THRILLER IS SET TO BLOW MICK HERRON'S SECRET STATUS

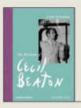
IOO pages. With no let-up in the page-turning throughout.

Herron's agents seem like real spies doing seemingly authentic spy stuff in London. They are based in Slough House, a drab City building and second-chance saloon for black-marked intelligence officers, and they find adventure in both paperwork and field work: this is a sweet spot between Spooks and George

Smiley. Herron's second Slough House book, *Dead Lions*, was the Crime Writers' Association's novel of the year in 2013 but it, and he, remained under the radar. With this new work, the third in the series, he's unlikely to stay a secret for much longer.

Real Tigers (John Murray) is out on II February





Gimme shutter: Cecil Beaton (below, right) joins James Fox and Mick Jagger on the set of *Performance*, London, November 1968

The style behind the camera

PHOTOGRAPHER CECIL BEATON TOOK PRIDE IN BEING A MEN'S FASHION PLATE, AS A NEW BOOK REVEALS

The photography of Cecil Beaton marks him out as one of the 20th century's finest imagemakers, equally at home orchestrating high fashion shoots, documenting war zones or taking high-society portraits, including those of the Royal Family, with whom he had a long and close association.

The man behind the lens, however, was also a fascinating subject in his own right. A self-professed "rabid aesthete" from the age of 18, Beaton went on to amass an extraordinary collection of bespoke clothing, much of which has been preserved for posterity in New York's Metropolitan Museum and at the V&A in London.

Now Beaton's sartorial adventures have been lovingly curated by writer and fashion historian Benjamin Wild in A Life in Fashion, featuring previously unpublished archival material, conversations with Beaton's former tailors (of which, unsurprisingly, he had many) and a foreword by renowned fashion photographer Tim Walker.

The book begins with Beaton's 1922 arrival in Cambridge as a bright young thing cutting a dash, clad in red shoes, black-and-white trousers and a large cravat. After this comes his Savile Row heyday in the Thirties and Forties — ever-experimental, Beaton kept accounts with both Anderson

& Sheppard and Huntsman, tailors with very differing house styles — and his dalliances with the new fashion of London as it began to swing in the Fifties and Sixties.

The book serves as both a fascinating biography-through-fashion of a Zelig-like figure who led a remarkable life while being impeccably dressed throughout, and an important document of men's style. In the words of Cecil Beaton himself: "All I want is the best of everything, and there's very little of that left."

A Life in Fashion: the Wardrobe of Cecil Beaton (Thames & Hudson) is out on & February





Awol in the arena: George Clooney (below) is an actor gone missing in the Coen Brothers' new film, *Hail*, *Caesar!* 10



Hollywood's Roman holiday

THE COEN BROTHERS CALL ON OLD FRIENDS TO LEND THEM THEIR EARS

— AND ACTING TALENT — IN A COMEDIC TAKE ON THE STAR SYSTEM

Hail, Caesar! could be the most Coen Brothers Coen Brothers film yet made. Set in Hollywood's Golden Age (as is the Coens' Barton Fink), with a cast of Coen company vets including George Clooney, Josh Brolin, Frances McDormand (aka Mrs Joel Coen), Tilda Swinton and Scarlett Johansson, it also features a kidnapping (see also Fargo, Raising Arizona, The Big Lebowski), real-life entertainment industry types (like Inside Llewyn Davis, which had a young Bob Dylan), a manhunt (No Country For Old Men,

True Grit) and a mocking but genuine affection for genre movies of the past (all of their work except *The Ladykillers*, which danced on the grave of the film it remade). In addition, there's a role for Ralph Fiennes, whose turn to comedy makes you think you've seen him before in a Coen Brothers film, yet *Hail*, *Caesar!* is, in fact, his first.

Clooney plays a leading man who disappears during the making of a Roman epic; Brolin is Capitol Pictures' head of physical production — the studio's fixer — who has 24 hours in which to track down his company's asset, and to keep the story out of the newspapers, for the sake of both the film and Hollywood's whiterthan-white reputation.

Despite having favourite ticks and tropes, the Coens are perhaps alone in being able to excel at comedy, drama and genre movies. After the perfectly pitched pathos of *Inside Llewyn Davis*, *Hail*, *Caesar!* is a return to the screwy comedy of *Raising Arizona* and *Lebowski* with movie-buff credentials of the highest order.

If you prefer real-life tales of vintage Hollywood, then Jean Stein's book *West of Eden*, a new oral history of moneyed, movie-making Los Angelenos, takes the less-trodden path from oil tycoons to the first studio moguls to Rupert Murdoch, via Lauren Bacall, Warren Beatty and Dennis Hopper.

Hail, Caesar! is out on 4 March; West of Eden (Jonathan Cape) is out now

A Phase he's going through

ON HIS DEBUT, NEWCOMER JACK GARRATT PROVES 2016'S FIRST BRIT AWARD IS DESERVED





"When I grow old, I'll drink and smoke," sings Jack Garratt on "Weathered", the first single from *Phase*, his debut album. It'll be Petrus and Cohibas all the way for the 24-year-old from Little Chalfont if he rides his wave of next-big-thing promise.

With the Critics' Choice Brit Award in the bag (previous winners: James Bay, Adele, Sam Smith), Garratt proves with *Phase* that he is a strong multitasker,

bolstering a voice ranging from Joe Cocker to Justin Timberlake with self-played instruments and loops, beats and samples from leftfield electronica and r'n'b.

He's been labelled as Ed Sheeran-withsynths, but that undersells something more interesting. For someone who has all the musical tools in his locker, Garratt doesn't use them all together all the time. On "The Love You're Given" and "Breathe Life", the production's to the fore. With "I Know All What I Do" and "My House Is Your Home", his vocal does the talking; the latter track, on which he accompanies himself on piano, sounds like a bedroom demo and is all the more engaging for it. Variation like this makes *Phase* a proper album from first track to last, and Garratt worth the hype.

Phase (Island) is out on 19 February

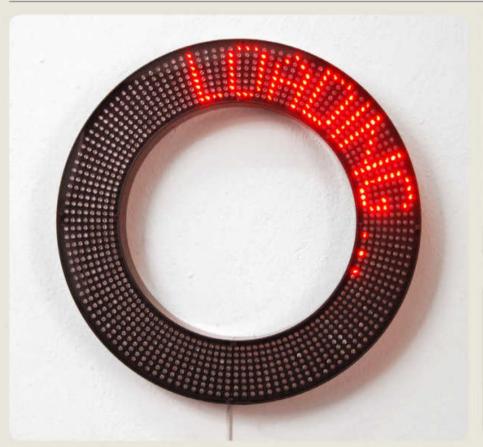


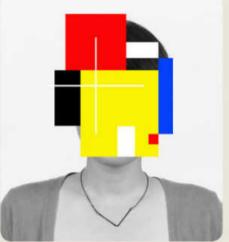
Retro techno: Tom Lean's book (left), and a London exhibition (below), appraise the advent of our electronic age

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How Britain downloaded the future

A NEW BOOK AND EXHIBITION TRACE THE 50-YEAR EVOLUTION OF OUR ELECTRONIC CULTURE









Given that it took more than half a century for the genius scientist Alan Turing to be recognised as the man who, basically, won World War II by inventing the computer, it's something of a surprise to see historians and curators already turning to the recent electronic age. But it's a welcome development: a new book and a new exhibition — unrelated — reveal fascinating stories and cutting-edge creativity.

Tom Lean's Electronic Dreams: How 1980s Britain Learned to Love the Computer, details the boom and busts of games and computermaking in the late Seventies and Eighties. Lean has spoken to all the major players, as

well as lesser-known ones, and packed his pages with nuggety info to write the first good book on the subject.

At the Whitechapel Gallery in London, Electronic Superhighway goes back a little further in time, to 1966, in order to bring together half a century of art inspired by and made with computer and internet technology. It's immediately nostalgic and most of the art you won't have seen before. Make a Kraftwerk playlist for when you visit to become one with the machine(s).

Electronic Dreams (Bloomsbury) is out on II February; Electronic Superhighway runs until I5 May



Vertical reality: filmmaker Jimmy Chin pushes for the summit (below) during the climb captured in *Meru*

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Daredevils on the roof of the world

THREE CLIMBERS RISK ALL AND TAKE ON ONE OF THE HIMALAYAS' MOST FORMIDABLE ASCENTS



With near-death experiences on their minds, the men are honest in explaining why they have to do what they do

The Shark's Fin, a 1,500ft-high blade of granite 20,700ft up, is the final challenge on the route up Meru Peak in the Himalayas. It's seen more failed attempts by climbers than any route in those mountains. When that fact arrives, not long into Meru-a documentary about three climbers striving to be the first to the peak via the Fin—it seems like a set-up for a simple tale of over-the-odds heroism.

Instead, what unfolds is a terrific film about failure, resolve and human spirit. One of the trio, Jimmy Chin, is also a film-maker and photographer, so much of the climbing footage in *Meru* is expertly shot. Unusually, especially since Chin and his companions are American outdoorsmen, there is none of the whooping or posturing that can make films of this type seem like ski bums' holiday videos.

Also welcome is the honesty of the three men in explaining why they feel they have to do what they do, with families at home and dead former climbing partners and near-death experiences on their minds. Understanding their compulsion is compelling: the talking-head moments are at times as dramatic as the mountain action. It's been over a dozen years since the classic climbing doc *Touching The Void*, and this film reaches similar heights.

Meru is available digitally from 12 February

Because the drug don't work

HOW THE SUNDAY TIMES' TENACIOUS REPORTING UNCOVERED THE THALIDOMIDE SCANDAL

Transformer memory and a state of the state

If Hollywood was in England, then All the President's Men would be Suffer the Children, starring Michael Caine as crusading Sunday Times editor Harold Evans and Albert Finney as Phillip Knightley, tenacious reporter on the Insight investigation team alongside Elaine Potter (Glenda Jackson) and Marjorie Wallace (Julie Christie). This all-star retelling of how the ST exposed the Thalidomide scandal would cement the work of Evans et al as

British journalism's finest hour. As it is, a new documentary, Attacking the Devil, featuring the above four in archive and talking-head versions and with Michael Sheen on voiceover, will have to do.

More than 40 years after the start of his campaign to get compensation for victims of the birth-defect-causing drug, and to uncover the dark truth behind its creation and sale, Evans is still, rightfully, indignant.

This film doesn't quite hit the heights of its makers' previous doc, McCullin, the superb biopic of photojournalist Don McCullin (a long-time Sunday Times colleague of Evans), but it is a wistful reminder of what newspapers can do and a vital story that must not be forgotten.

Attacking the Devil is out now, and released on disc and download on I May

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Cutting the deal: Bobby Cannavale, as cokefuelled record label boss Richie Finestra (below, centre), leads the cast of HBO's Vinyl



Don't stop till you get enough

JAGGER AND SCORSESE'S HEDONISTIC MUSIC-BIZ DRAMA VINYL SERVES UP THE SEVENTIES ON A PLATTER

It starts with a guy (Bobby Cannavale) in his car in a scuzzy Seventies New York alley, buying a vial of cocaine. Not the most surprising opening for the first episode of *Vinyl*, HBO's music industry drama, produced by Mick Jagger and Martin Scorsese. Then come the twists, small at first: the guy ripping off the rear view mirror to chop out his lines; a crowd of punks and freaks running right over the top of his car and drawing him out along with them to a basement club. The bigger twists, such as how he got to the alleyway in the first place, are too good to be spoiled here.

Over the course of the two-hour pilot directed by Scorsese, there is much to admire. The magnificent dialogue is scripted by

George Mastras and Terence Winter. Mastras worked on every season of *Breaking Bad*; Winter is an alumnus of *The Sopranos*, who also co-created *Boardwalk Empire* (for which Scorsese directed a two-hour pilot), and wrote the screenplay for Scorsese's *The Wolf of Wall Street*. "I had a golden ear, a silver tongue and a pair of brass balls," says Cannavale's character Richie Finestra, in voiceover, "but the problem became my nose, and everything I put up it."

So, there is a lot of drugs — and sex and rock'n'roll — plus a retro workplace environment and criminal behaviour, in the tale of a man who can feel life slipping through his fingers (and his possibly deviated septum). You might say it's *Goodfellas* meets *Casino* meets *Mad Men*, and conclude that

Vinyl is not as original as you'd hoped. Or you might say that using key elements of those entertainment milestones and spinning them into the excess-all-areas Seventies music industry is a recipe for success.

But there is real heart here, especially in the performance of Cannavale, who, as record label boss Finestra, is fragile, feisty and funny. Scorsese's direction makes for easily the most visually arresting, at times epic, TV pilot there's been (yes, including *Lost* and the plane crash). It'd be impossible to watch the astonishing finale of the first episode without wanting to watch the second, if only to see how they can follow it up.

Vinyl starts on Sky Atlantic on 15 February

In which our man closes his rural reflections with notes on horses, villainy and chard





Nature does not give up her mysteries easily

Not long after moving into our new house in Gloucestershire, I decided to keep a nature diary. I thought it might eventually make an expensive illustrated coffee-table book and be a good way for Mother Nature to pay off some of the monster sum I had disbursed for the privilege of looking at her. It would be all about how a chap from London moves to the country and is captivated by the beauty of the turning seasons, the abundance of flora and fauna, the gleam of Mother Nature's

palette. It would start off quite general but as I came to know the names (Latin and demotic) of plants and animals, it would soon become an invaluable resource for people fascinated by the magic of the countryside. After three months, it looked like this:

1 DECEMBER: Planned a long walk to get the lie of the land, the local topography, establish the principal rock, soil and grass types, but Esther said I was out of my mind if I thought I was going to fuck off all day and leave her alone with two children under four. So I stayed in with my son and watched monster-truck compilations on YouTube.

3 DECEMBER: Saw a bird. Small, brown, erratic flight pattern. Possibly a wren. More likely a sparrow. Could have been a leaf.

4 DECEMBER: Drove to the country supplies megastore in the village to buy some binoculars to help me tell birds from leaves. It is a shop the size of Wales that sells things country people need. Literally could not identify a single item. There were some pretty girls on work experience in the horse department so I pretended I needed a bridle and a bit and some whips. Then asked them to demonstrate exactly how they worked. Was escorted from the premises by several tractor boys.

7 DECEMBER: Sat in my study looking out at the myriad winter visitors to my magnificent new bird table as they feasted on the assorted seeds and nibbling toys. But I've seen rats before.



9 DECEMBER: Still not allowed to go for a walk, but was able to slip off for a few minutes into the small wood behind the house to do some tree-spotting. The gardener says the trees are mostly oak, ash and, um, one other famous one. Birch? Hazel? Anyway, I'm fucked if I can tell which is which without the leaves on. Or even with them on, to be honest.

13 DECEMBER: Saw a badger close up. Britain's largest carnivore. Our island's super-predator. Had never realised how big they were. Truly, a magnificent and noble beast. Even with tyre marks down its face and its guts welded to the tarmac.

January/February: Raining. And also bloody cold. Might try again in the spring.



Nobody can eat that much chard

When we moved in, it was deep winter and there was not much in the vegetable patch: a handful of frost-bitten leeks and a short row of chard. But it was our own, and it was delicious. I cut the chard leaves with pride. chunky stalks and all, and then looked them up online to see what I could do with them. Not a lot, was the answer. And whatever you do do with them involves a lot of washing, then separating the leaves from the stalks, blanching the stalks for a minute in boiling water, then the leaves for a few seconds, then cooling it all, pressing in a colander to remove excess water so that your end dish is not all soggy, then either frying with garlic to get an end result a bit like spinach, or baking in a gratin dish with cheese and milk to get a result a bit like boiled sick. It's very easy to grow, though, which is why it is known in market-gardening circles as "the gardener's friend" as opposed to, say, "the cook's friend" or "the eater's friend".

Still, you can get used to anything, including boiled sick, and pretty soon I had my chard preparation process from earth to table down to just a few short hours. So, when the gardener asked what vegetables I wanted planting for the following year, I had a sort of blank — like a contestant on *The Weakest Link* who can't think of a word for female monarch beginning with Q apart from "Quim Lord" — and said, "mostly chard".

Come the spring and we had three rows of it. Maybe 20 plants to each row, each plant giving you about two gratins, each gratin serving up to four people. And each plant, being a cut-and-come-again variety, giving you three full heads of chard per season. Which is roughly 1,400 large portions of chard gratin a year.

Now, we're only looking like being at the place 60 days a year, tops. Which means that each day we are there we must consume between 23 and 24 large portions of chard gratin. And the kids won't touch the stuff. So that's 12 portions each per day unless we

have guests, which we try to do most weekends. But everyone we know has now had the chard gratin at least twice so people are starting to turn down our invitations.

As the year pushes on and every chard plant we eat grows back with redoubled vigour, I lie awake in bed in London, feeling incredibly guilty for not being in Gloucestershire, eating chard, and do furious mental arithmetic.

"If I cancel all my filming and we take the kids out of school for November," I suddenly say to Esther at three in the morning. "We could go and live down there and maybe your folks could join us and we could make a real dent in that chard."

And she'll say, "Shut up, go back to sleep, we can compost the chard."

But the thought of such waste just breaks my heart and I lie awake some more until suddenly I sit up in bed and cry, "To hell with chard gratin!"

And Esther breathes a premature sigh of relief as I shout, "We can make chard soup! With a little nutmeg it'll be delicious! And we can have stuffed chard, curried chard, and raw chard salad, and chard tart, and..."

Children could not give less of a shit about the countryside

I had been very much looking forward to singing songs and playing games with my kids on the journeys to and from The Cattle Barn but all they ever want to do is watch *Fireman Sam* on their iPads. So I tell them they have to wait until they're on the motorway for their iPads. Now, I spy with my little...

"Is this the motorway?"

"No, this is town. That's why there are houses. Now, I spy with my little..."

"Is this the motorway?"

"No. This is a fucking traffic jam on the North Circular, it'll clear in a few hours. Now, I spy with my little..."

"Is this the motorway?"

Chard is known in market-gardening circles as 'the gardener's friend' as opposed to, say, 'the cook's friend' or 'the eater's friend' "OK! OK! Watch Fireman fucking Sam then! But if anyone asks me again if this is the motorway I am going to throw those fucking iPads out of the fucking window!"

And then finally you arrive at your beautiful new, totally child-oriented house in six acres of its own land with sheep and stables and a climbing frame and a slide and a trampoline and a sandpit and a huge barn room with indoor swings and a train set and bicycles, and the kids run into the house, straight into the sitting room, leap onto the sofa in front of the telly and shout:

"Fireman Sam! Fireman Sam! Fireman Sam! Fireman Sam!"

Horses are a bit shit at grazing

Now, I've got a ride-on lawnmower. It cost me five grand. But it turns out that this is only for mowing the actual garden. For the horse paddocks, the gardener says, we'll definitely need a tractor, which is 20 grand I simply don't have (see previously: "The country is fucking expensive"). So, I put my mind to the problem and soon realised that, surely, the best thing for keeping the grass down in horse paddocks is horses.

Except I don't want to own horses. They're expensive and there's going to be nobody here to look after them most of the time, and nobody in my family can ride them or wants to ride them. But I thought they'd be picturesque to look at and useful for keeping the grass down, so I asked some people down the lane if they'd like to put their three horses on our fields, and they said they would. And I thought what a nice turn I was doing them and how nicely everything looked like turning out. Then we went back to London and didn't come back for a month or so because the weather was poor and I had a lot of stuff on in town.

When we came back in March, it looked like somebody had held a re-enactment of the Battle of the Marne in our fields. The lovely green paddocks were all churned to mud, there were piles of horse shit three feet high all over the place, loads of thistles and patches of long grass, loads of fence rails down and the ones that weren't down were all chewed to shit. I asked the gardener what on earth had happened.

"It's just the horses," he said. "That's what horses do. They chew the fences and shit a lot. Did nobody tell you? And they're not very good at grazing. Sheep are better for that. And they're much better in a stew."

So I got some sheep. And he was right. Everything looks much nicer now. And if



I thought horses would be picturesque to look at and useful for keeping the grass down. Instead, our fields were made to look like somebody had held a re-enactment of the Battle of the Marne

any of them makes too much noise or looks like a troublemaker, I just eat the fucker.

Gypsies are an actual thing

OK, so gypsies are actually a big thing in the country. And not in a good way. Not in the London way of how they have to be protected and the Roma language is a precious treasure and they are the forgotten victims of the Nazi Holocaust and so on. But as in, "Watch out for the gypsies, they'll have anything that isn't nailed down."

I laughed the first time I heard it. I'd seen a gypsy camp outside the local village with actual painted caravans and big horses tethered up and grazing, and men with red bandannas knotted on their heads and half-naked kids playing hide and seek in the road. Very picturesque. Very Thomas Hardy. Part of the rural colour I am shelling out the big bucks for. I mentioned it to a man in the pub.

"That'll be Stow Fair," he said. "They come from all around when it's on. They used to come to steal horses."

"Ha ha, yes, I imagine they did," I said.

"But that was a long time ago."

"Right you are," said the man. "Now they come to steal cars."

"Ha ha ha," I said.

"And tractors," he went on. "And mowers, drills, general farm machinery, horse-trailers. Anything that isn't nailed down."

"Ha ha ha ha," I said, finishing my pint and sidling away. In the back bar I ordered a pint off a young barman in a Bob Marley T-shirt.

"So these gypsies that come for the fair," I said to him. "They don't really steal farm machinery, do they?"

"Not any more," he said.

"I thought not," I laughed, relieved.

"The farmers have wised up. They don't give them the chance. Machinery all gets locked up when the fairs are on. Everything into the barns then padlocks, dogs, and they'll sit out with guns and a Thermos. It's you people who get robbed."

"Us?" I said.

"Weekenders. You don't take the gypsies seriously. You think we're a load of old racists. You leave your car out just like always. They'll have that. They'll have Google Earthed your whole place to check for access points, weaknesses, unattended large items: wheelbarrows, spades and forks, planters, trailers, pets... if it's midweek and they think you're

in town they'll have the gravel off your drive."

Walking home from the pub, I saw the gypsies again. Sitting around the campfire, singing. I don't know much about gypsies, but these are not random crusty travellers we're talking about. These are like something out of *Asterix in Spain*, yodelling into the night and being nice to their animals.

Still, I closed the rickety old wooden gate on to our drive, and double-locked the Jag. The ride-on mower was safely barricaded into the stable. I wondered briefly if they steal sheep?

Next morning, I was making a cup of tea when my favourite neighbour knocked on the door (the countryside is like *Neighbours*, except with old men in flat caps instead of young Australian girls in swimsuits).

"Tea?" I ask.

"Thank you, but I can't stop," said the old boy. "I just came by to warn you about the gypsies."

My heart sank.

"Don't worry," I said. "They told me in the pub. The mower's locked up. The car is in the garage."

"Oh, I'm not worried about your car," he said. "It's the hare coursing I hate. They'll loiter around the perimeter of your land to see who's coming and going — they might even offer to do work for you, lay a drive, move some bricks, but it's a smokescreen — and if they think you're not around, they'll get the dogs out and start flushing the hares. It's illegal and quite horribly barbaric."

"OK," I said wearily. "If I see any gypsies with dogs I'll tell them to go away."

"No!" he cried. "For heaven's sake don't approach them. You haven't got proper guns, have you? They're very dangerous people. No, just call me and I'll have it dealt with. But don't talk to them. Don't even look at them. The fair's over tomorrow and they'll move on."

And so I sat indoors for the next two days, with my family close by, staring out at the rain, pathetic air rifle to hand, still pretty certain that this was all just rural paranoia and refusing to let such explicit racial profiling cloud my judgement of my fellow men. And also feeling terribly guilty about one of the little bogeyman tricks we'd been playing on Kitty since we arrived here. One which we have done so often that now, whenever she punches her little brother, or throws water bombs indoors or makes chocolatey handprints on the wall, she immediately says, "Sorry, sorry, sorry, please don't sell me to the gypsies!"

And now after all those months when I thought we were joking, I find myself expecting a guy with an eye patch and a pair of lurchers to knock on the door and make me an offer.

'For heaven's sake don't approach the gypsies,' said my neighbour. 'Don't talk to them. Don't even look at them'







It might not feel like it now—OK, it doesn't feel like it at all—but soon the buds will be bursting, the leaves unfolding, the birds singing, the evenings lengthening, and a young man's thoughts will turn to... well, style, sheds, shaving, salads and stacks of other stuff

(some, but not all, beginning with "s")

Get ahead, get a shed. But first read this (and then read something else)

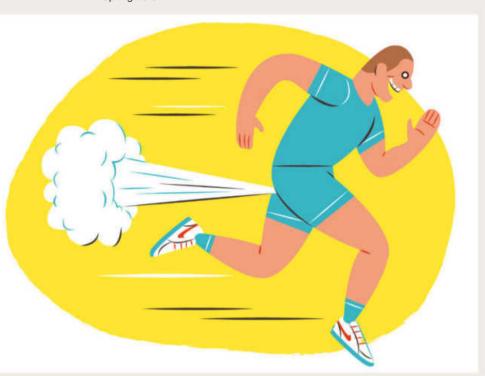
The urge to shed up can be strong, especially in spring, and for some there is no denying it. One minute you're looking at the bottom of the garden, the next you're halfway to living in it. But your shed doesn't have to be one of unpainted FSC timber plucked from the shed farm at the back of a B&Q. A new book, *Nanotecture: Tiny Built Things* (Phaidon), features the best small spaces in the world, and includes a slew of sheds and shed-like buildings, as well as tree houses, wheeled living spaces and pod-like places that Seventies sci-fi thought we'd be living in now. Inspiring stuff.

Nanotecture (Phaidon) is out on 1 March



Pimp your jog with Fartlek (snigger)

There's nothing funny about Fartlek (double snigger), the Swedish training method that translates as "speed play". It's a running technique that combines continuous training and interval training, and involves constantly switching your speed as you select different outdoor landmarks to sprint, jog, canter or skip towards. For instance, you might choose a distant tree to jog to, then sprint to a nearby bench, then run at mid-pace towards a lamppost in the middle distance. The varying of pace and intensity allows your body to re-use energy, in a process called "the lactate shuttle" (chortle).



Make sure you're on the right flight

If in doubt, go on holiday to where the sun is and cheap flights can be found. The places to be, according to *Esquire*'s expert, Tom Barber of Original Travel are:



Oman

While much of the Middle East continues to self-destruct, the Sultanate of Oman remains resolutely open for business, and it's a far more sophisticated affair than its neighbour Dubai (UAE). Temperatures in March and April are probably the warmest within reasonable flying time (seven hours) of the UK, and you can take your pick from beachfront R&R in the capital Muscat (try The Chedi hotel), or amp up the adventure by taking a 4x4 up and over the dramatic Al Hajar mountains, complete with wadis and the world's second deepest canyon (Wadi Ghul), or dive in the Daymaniyat Islands.

San Francisco, Napa and Sonoma valleys

The perfect slick city/beautiful countryside one-two. 'Frisco is buzzing now, thanks to its tech cred (Instagram, Twitter, Uber all call the city home), while the nightlife and boutique hotel scenes are thriving. Then, just an hour away lie Napa and Sonoma valleys, home of America's finest wines. Stay at Calistoga Ranch, book a driver (who might just happen to be a former winemaker) for the day and wine-taste your way around the vineyards. The temperature throughout should be in the civilised low-20s, and as 'Frisco's famous fogs don't roll in till June, April and May are perfect.

Iceland

Quirky doesn't come close to describing a land where native lass Björk would barely register on the eccentric-o-meter. Capital Reykjavik is great fun, but the real attraction is the landscape of volcanoes, glaciers, geysers and wild coast to explore in super-Jeeps (pimped 4x4s with huge wheels). Do: ride snowmobiles on glaciers, dive between tectonic plates and explore ice tunnels under glaciers. Don't: eat local delicacy, fermented shark. In spring, Icelanders emerge from months of hibernation to party. Hard.

originaltravel.co.uk



Make a salad like Russell Norman Courgette, basil and Parmesan

"This is a startlingly simple salad that can be eaten on its own as a light lunch on a bright spring day, or as a side dish to accompany a piece of simply grilled fish," says acclaimed restaurateur and Esquire's own Accidental Cook, Russell Norman. "March is a few months early for English courgettes, but you will find early Mediterranean varieties in good grocers and supermarkets. The trick is to slice the courgette as thinly as possible. The wafer-like slices take on a delicacy that we don't normally associate with courgette. It is also important to make sure the salad is not overdressed - you want the elements to be daintily and lightly coated rather than doused."

Ingredients

- 4 courgettes
- Large handful of rocket
 leaves
- Small handful of basil leaves
- Juice of one lemon
- Salt and pepper
- 6 tbsps extra virgin olive oil
- 2 heaped tbsps finely grated Parmesan

Method

- First make the dressing by mixing the lemon juice with the olive oil, most of the Parmesan and a little salt and pepper.
- 2. Finely slice the courgettes on an angle into a bowl. Use a mandoline if you have one or a peeler if you don't. Mix this with the rocket, basil and enough of the dressing to coat. Taste, adjust seasoning and divide among four small plates. Scatter the remaining Parmesan over the top.



Build a library of rainy-day classics

Any day can be a wet Saturday afternoon on BBC2 with these black-and-white film classics to stream.



His Girl Friday (1940)

Classic Cary Grant screwball, newspaper-based comedy really is still funny after all these years. (Netflix)

Rififi (1955)

Brilliant French noir with a half-hour heist sequence Danny Ocean dreams about. (Netflix)

12 Angry Men (1957)

A dozen fellas debate a possible case of patricide. Talky, gripping, magnificent. (Netflix)

The Apartment (1960)

Workplace romcom has razor-sharp edges and best-ever Jack Lemmon and Shirley MacLaine. (Netflix)

8½ (1963)

Come for the Fifties Italian style; stay for the truth about How to be a Man. (Curzon Home Cinema)

The Spy Who Came in from the Cold (1965)

The yin to Bond's yang: Richard Burton broods in top-drawer Cold War Le Carré. (Netflix)

The Day the Earth Caught Fire (1961)

British B-movie of the start of the end of the world: it's 28 Days Later... 40 years earlier. (BFI Player)

The Colditz Story (1955)

By the director of Goldfinger (1964), a PoW classic with an upper lip as stiff as they come. (Amazon Video)

The Longest Day (1962)

D-Day, 6 June, 1944, as fought by Connery, Mitchum, Wayne, Fonda (Henry), Burton, more and yet more. (iTunes)



This, on top of that, on top of that: the Esquire guide to 'layering'

The key item for spring is a cashmere deconstructed blazer by Brunello Cucinelli (£2,670). Insanely soft and insulating, it will work as well as an outer layer as it will as a blazer. Wear with a white cellular vest or crew-neck T-shirt from Sunspel (£120) and a Dunhill wool overshirt (£295) done up beneath the blazer for a chic, understated effect. Button up the overshirt, tuck it into your trousers and wear beneath the blazer to smarten up, or simply undo everything and flow free if you fancy going casual (or it gets a bit warm). You can always throw a piqué cotton shirt (£120, Sunspel) in there if you want to add depth but ensure it's a shade darker or lighter than the woollen one,



For the love of Lycra, don't get on the wrong bike

Practical, fitness-promoting and (if you choose wisely) stylish; buying a bike is a strong springtime move. But which type of bike is right for you? Find out now, via our decidedly unscientific survey.



Folding: Brompton

Smart, practical, well-suited to town riding and — in the case of the Brompton, the most iconic of the folding bikes — supremely well-made.

PROS: If you go for a post-work drink (or two) then it fits beautifully in the boot of an Uber.

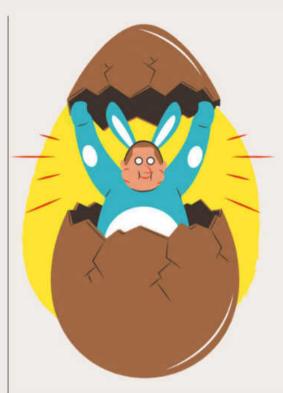
CONS: More than occasionally annoying to lug around. Not quite as light and convenient as you think it is. *brompton.com*





A robust, grown-up, multi-terrain vehicle that needn't break the bank. **PROS:** It's actually a proper bike, with gears and suspension, that won't spontaneously combust if you go off-road.

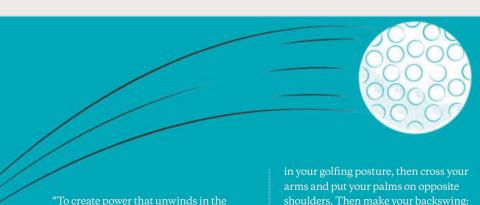
CONS: Potentially a gateway drug to skintight Lycra, obscurer-the-better retro jerseys and increasingly tiny peaked caps. *bmc-switzerland.com*



Easter eggs: go large or go home

Preparing an egg hunt? Simply phone Bond Street chocolatiers Charbonnel et Walker, and pre-order Big Bertha. A mighty 31ins high, 67ins in circumference and weighing in at 27 pounds of finest English plain chocolate, the hand-decorated Bertha is a magnificent beast — truly the finest egg in Charbonnel et Walker's oeufre [You're fired — Ed]. For those unwilling to spend upwards of £650 on an individual egg that must be pre-ordered and is all but impossible to hide, similarly revered chocolatiers Prestat offer an Art Deco Rainbow Mini Egg Collection for a mere £12.

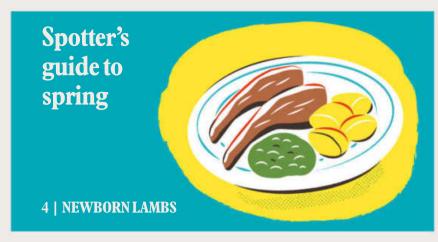
charbonnel.co.uk; prestat.co.uk



"To create power that unwinds in the swing, you need to build resistance between the lower body and upper body. Pivot drills are always good for this. Stand

in your golfing posture, then cross your arms and put your palms on opposite shoulders. Then make your backswing: turn your hips about 45° and then your upper body about 90°. That creates kind of a coil effect in your body. When you

then start the downswing, attacking the ball, you want that coil to unspring, which creates the speed in the club to propel the ball out there. At the end, you're effectively looking down the fairway, into a full, balanced follow-through position, so the hips are looking at the target, the upper body pointing to the right of the target and the right foot has come up onto its toe. Do that in a mirror for 20 minutes a day — or two minutes a day, whatever time you have. It will improve you."

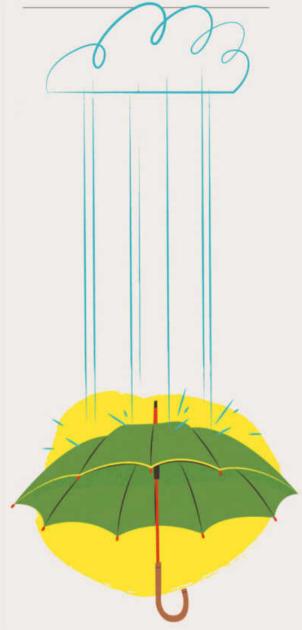


Do that thing where you put your winter clothes in a special bag and suck the air out with a vacuum cleaner and then hide it under the bed to leave more room to buy more new clothes and when you open the bag in October the clothes are pristine



Keeping autumn/winter clothes in a vacuum storage bag to make room for your spring/summer wardrobe saves time and hassle but not so much money, what with all that freed-up rail space to fill. It also helps to keep your winter favourites in best order for when they're needed. Choose an opaque storage bag, so you can see what's what: the usual suspects (John Lewis, Amazon, Argos) stock them. Only put away clean, folded clothes. And that thin jumper you ummed and aahed about keeping before deciding to store it? Put that in last, close to the opening, obviously. Then vice-versa the lot when autumn arrives.

johnlewis.com; amazon.co.uk; argos.co.uk



Be underneath an umbrella that's too good to lose — and then try not to lose it

If you're going to buy an umbrella, it's probably best to buy one made in a country that suffers more rain than most. Enter London Undercover, a newish British brand that, for the past six years, has been producing superlative rain protectors (it also does a natty line in cagoules). The navy contour umbrella (above) from the brand's premium range is our pick of its bunch. Featuring a heavy-duty frame, which will withstand most gusts, and a solid maple wood handle, this is one umbrella you won't want to leave on the number 35.

londonundercover.co.uk





De-rust the BBQ now, not five minutes before the sausages go on in June

You told yourself to put away the BBQ properly before winter, but that was when you were also telling yourself to listen to yourself more. Even more disappointing than these two failures is what results from them: the postponement of the year's first cook-out because of a foul, rusty grill. So, instead of cleaning to the soundtrack of tutting guests, get it ready now. For cast iron grills, a rubdown with, or a soak in, a solution of half-water, half-white vinegar. Stainless steel grills need a rub with a heaped tablespoon of baking soda dissolved in 500ml water. To ensure you never have to clean this way again, brush oil (vegetable or peanut) on the grill every time before you cook, then invest in a long-handled BBQ brush, such as the 21-inch Weber T-Brush, and use after the food is off and while the grill is hot. You're welcome.

Impress your friends (the male ones, anyway): spin a cricket ball

Cricket's most mysterious art made less so. "Focus on creating rotational energy on the ball," says Peter Such, National Lead Spin Bowling Coach at the ECB, by definition the country's top teacher of twirling. "You do that by using your whole body, not just your fingers and wrist. Energy generates from the floor up, and the bigger muscles in your body have the greatest opportunity to generate energy: hips, thighs, hamstrings and shoulders. So be strong there, but not too muscle-bound in the shoulders, where muscle speed and flexibility is needed. At the start

target side-on and bring your bowling arm quickly through and over about 180°, to generate energy. Your fingers and wrist supply the finishing touches of spin. Practising spinning any sort of ball, wherever you can - watching TV, at your desk - will toughen your fingers, strengthen your wrist and give you greater understanding of how you're moving the ball. Then you'll find 'the feel' — that sensation of knowing the ball is flipping off the end of your fingers just right. In spring, you'll have cold hands, which reduces feel on the ball. Hand warmers in your pockets can help here."





Buy a raincoat (and make it a Mac)

If you're going to buy a raincoat, you could do worse than invest in one from British brand Mackintosh. The heritage label, which has been going since 1823 (it was founded, appropriately enough, by a Scotsman, Charles Mackintosh), is renowned for its tape-seamed, elegant raincoats. For spring/summer 2016, Mackintosh has collaborated on a range of outer layers with Japanese label Hyke, which means they'll be even trendier than usual.

mackintosh.com

Sow your wild herbs

Practical, mind-clearingly serene, and an indication you could go full hunter-gatherer and live entirely off the land, if necessary. Growing herbs is a rite of spring passage: here's the Royal Horticultural Society's chief advisor, Guy Barter, on how to grow the most seasonally appropriate.

"Herbs should be gathered young and fresh," Barter says, "as the aroma is almost always stronger than in the dried product and the flavours more complex and pleasing. The strongest flavour is obtained from plants just before they come into flower. Gather early in the day before the midday sun evaporates the essential oils that add to their flavour. Once cut, keep washing to a minimum to preserve the flavour and scent of your chosen herb." rhs.org.uk

Getting started:

- 1. Soak the seeds of your chosen herb in water for a few hours before planting.
- Choose pots with holes in the base for drainage, fill with compost and pat down to lose air pockets.
- 3. Moisten soil then sow one seed 1–3 times deeper than the size of the seed.



Basil

Only grows to about 30cm tall, so it's ideal for window boxes and small, warm spaces (eg, windowsill). Once germinated and shoots appear, the youthful basil can be planted outside in late May, in a sunny, sheltered spot. As the plant grows, pinch off the tips of new growth to encourage bushiness and delay flowering. Pick the leaves during the growing season (April–September) and use fresh or dried in dishes.

Bay

Thrives in containers in sunny areas and is easily kept small and bushy by cutting back. Eventually, you should have a plant 60–120cm high and wide. Grown in a tub or a large pot, they can be taken inside during severe weather to avoid frost damage, but even if killed to near the base, it will usually grow back in the next spring. Use the leaves fresh or dried but uncrushed, as the essential oil is very strong.

Chives

This European native usually grows to 25cm. Once grown, leaves should be picked as needed to within an inch of the ground. In early summer, pinch off the purple flower buds before they burst to give more leaves.

Thyme

A small, evergreen shrub that grows to 20cm; if looked after it will keep growing back each year. When you sow the seeds, make sure the plant is kept inside for the first few weeks.

Coriander

Grows fast to 30–45cm and flowers quickly, after which it's unusable, but sowing more seeds every 2–3 weeks will mean a plentiful supply through the growing season. A highly versatile plant, leaves and roots can be used fresh, while dried seeds can be used in curries and pickles. Tasty, leafy varieties slow to form flowers include Confetti and Santos.

Fly a bloody kite

Because whenever you see someone flying a kite, you think, "If I was here right now and had a kite, I would totally be doing that, too." Fran Burstall never has the disappointment that follows that thought, because he is a long-time and expert kite flyer. "Most people buy cheap kites from toy shops and all that buys you is frustration," he says. "For £40, the Beetle X-15 is a good beginner's kite. For something that you'll really enjoy flying, spend £200 on one with an 8ft wingspan, like the Phantom. Both of those are dual-line kites: flying a single-line is like walking a dog. Dual line you control, and that is very satisfying indeed. Find a nice flat space far away from trees, because they cut up the wind and make it a bit more unpleasant. Football pitches, or groups of pitches together: that's where I practice. Make sure there are no power lines near, because you might die. Another person at the other end of the line is good, especially as a beginner. On your own it's a struggle. If you are alone, take a screwdriver to anchor the handles to the ground, while you turn a downed kite the right way around. Your kite will probably come with line; it's essential you use all the line. Even more essential is, before you start, to check carefully that each line is exactly the same length. Just 2-3ins difference will mean the kite always spins."

Colours in Motion Beetle X-15, £40, kiteworld.co.uk Benson Phantom, £220, bensonkites.com

Hit the road in Paul Smith's genius, season-straddling travel suit (you can wear it in autumn, too!)



Cut from lightweight, crease-resistant wool, Paul Smith's A Suit To Travel In is a spring essential. Breathable yet insulating, the suit will keep the heat in and the cold out and vice versa. Wear with an open-necked shirt when the weather's fair and with a light overcoat when, well, it's not. The best thing about this suit, though, is that you can roll it up in your bag or wear it on a flight and there won't be a crease in sight. Genius.

 $\pounds 730, paul smith. co.uk$



Flipping marvellous

Eating turkey once a year is understandable: it's not the sweetest of the table birds. But only eating pancakes once, 47 days before Easter Sunday — for that is when Shrove Tuesday always falls — is lunacy. The humble pancake is, for some reason, impressive way beyond its simple parts and preparation, whether at weekend breakfast or as an impromptu dessert. You will need plain flour, milk and eggs: 100g, 350ml and one egg and a yolk, respectively, to make six pancakes. Sift the flour into a bowl; add the eggs and milk; whisk into a batter. (A level tablespoon of caster sugar mixed into the sifted flour makes the sweet ones.) You won't need a frying pan: the sides interfere with the pancake's evenness and flipping. A crêpe or pancake pan, with no sides and a flat bottom, is your friend here. Only use a lick of melted butter for cooking with and only flip after shaking the pancake loose — if it doesn't come loose, it's not cooked enough — and angling the pan down slightly. Or, alternatively, get down to London's best crêperie, Shutterbug, just off Shoreditch's Rivington Street, for a galette (that's a buckwheat pancake): Esquire's favourite comes with seared chorizo, vintage cheddar, avocado and homemade smoked chilli jam, yours for £7. They do a killer cocktail, too.

Shutterbug, 1 Rivington Place, London EC2A 3BA; shutterbug-london.com



Spring into action: the sex factor

"In the spring, a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love," wrote Alfred Lord Tennyson in his 1835 verse, Locksley Hall. He was wrong. (Well, partly wrong.) Science says that men are steadily thinking about love — or perhaps luuurve — during all four of the seasons, thanks to our steady production of testosterone. Women, however, according to a paper published by the department of psychology at the University of Tromsø

in Norway, are at their most romantically inclined when spring breaks after the dark of winter. So take advantage: British beaches are at their best early on a Sunday morning, and at this time of year are elementally uplifting. Take a stroll along one to a suitable cosy lunch for two — and then who knows where the mood might take you.

CORNWALL: Polzeath to Rock (about three miles), then the 10-minute ferry to

Padstow and lunch at Rick Stein's Seafood Restaurant. rickstein.com

DORSET: Lyme Regis to Uplyme and back, then along the seafront (about four miles) to the estimable Hix Oyster and Fish House. hixoysterandfishhouse. co.uk

KENT: Botany Bay to Ramsgate (about five miles), and a table upstairs at the restaurant of Age & Sons. ageandsons.co.uk



Season's eatings

"Spring is the welcome return of gentle, soft little shoots and tender green veg," says Jeremy Lee, head chef at Quo Vadis (quovadissoho.co.uk). "Suddenly, after the comforting, soothing and substantial food of winter, menus turn to lighter and more delicate ingredients that herald a welcome elegance to the diet." Here are the meat and veg that come into their own at springtime, and the dishes to try making with them:



Lamb

Roast butterflied leg of lamb, parsley and anchovy sauce

Chicken

Roast chicken stuffed with lemon, parsley and garlic

Broad beans

Potted broad beans with crab

Sea kale

Warm sea kale with butter sauce

Leeks

Warm leek and vinaigrette salad, chopped boiled egg and parsley

Wild boar

Roast saddle of boar with potato, celeriac, chard and sage gratin

Lose the bum fluff, scruff

There is such a thing as springtime grooming and here are three products that prove it. Shedding dead skin, cutting off lank hair and removing facial fuzz — it is all about renewal. Give yourself a spring clean with these seasonal grooming items.

A new generation of skin brushes is doing the rounds at the moment and none are better than the charcoal-imbued Sonic System Cleansing Brush from Clinique. Gentle and effective, it lifts off dead, winter-raddled skin and brightens. *clinique.co.uk*

Sisley's Eau de Campagne smells like newly cut grass. Bright and fresh, it's the perfect thing to ease you through spring. sisley-paris.com

Get rid of matted facial hair in the most luxurious way possible with Acqua di Parma's Barbiere shaving kit. Nothing says spring like a squeaky clean face. *acquadiparma.com*

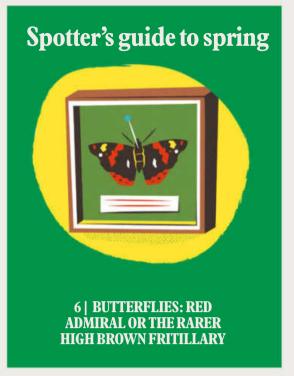


This is how you go jogging without looking like a tool

In What I Talk About When I Talk About Running, Haruki Murakami writes "pain is inevitable. Suffering is optional." Lessen the hurt in kit that won't make you look like a statically charged, Eighties PE teacher. Ironically, shimmery fabrics, track tops and jogging bottoms are on-trend for S/S '16 but not for doing any actual exercise. Iffley Road is a British running wear brand named after the Oxford track where Roger Bannister ran his sub-four minute mile. Kit is subtly retro and cut from technical, Italian fabrics that wick away sweat. We can't help with the rest of the suffering but this is a good place to start.

iffleyroad.com





Make a meaningless statement: purchase a racehorse



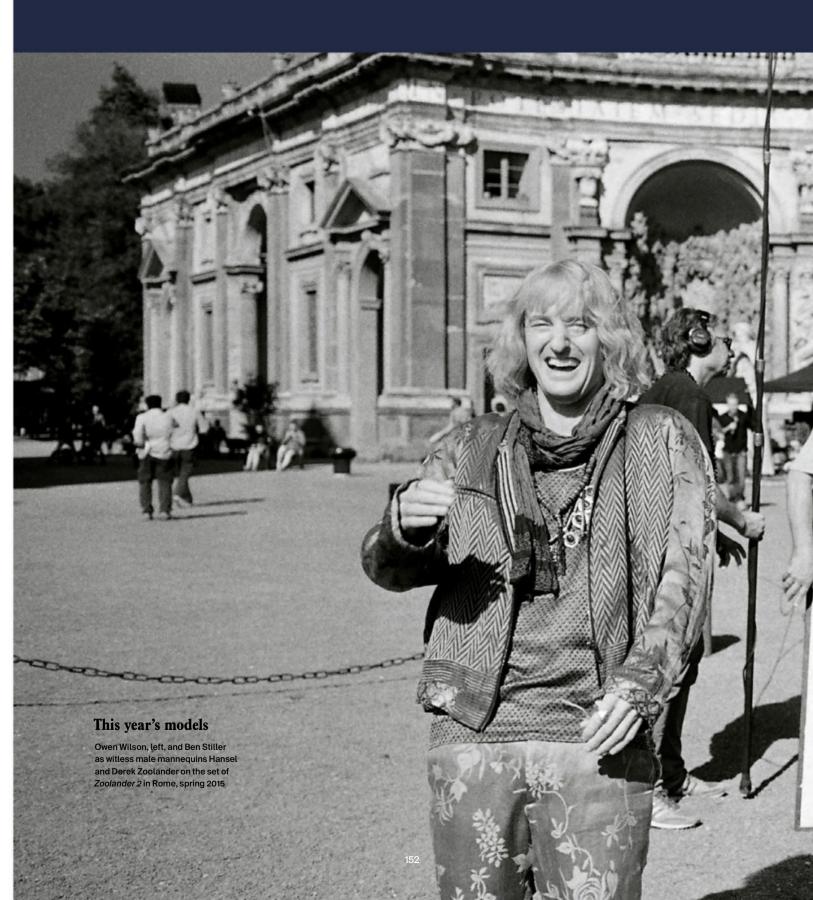
There comes a time in every man's life when he impulsively decides to buy a racehorse. So, you should know the proper way it's done. One can expect to pay north of £20,000 for a horse, and at least the same again in yearly training costs and race entry fees, from a bloodstock auctioneer like Tattersalls. Horses are still traded in

old-money guineas (a pound and a shilling, £1.05), just to make the process even more Dickensian. A less eye-watering way to invest in the sport of kings is to purchase a share in a horse by joining a syndicate or partnership such as Highclere or Owners for Owners. Shares start from around £2,500 (plus VAT), and a running cost shared is a

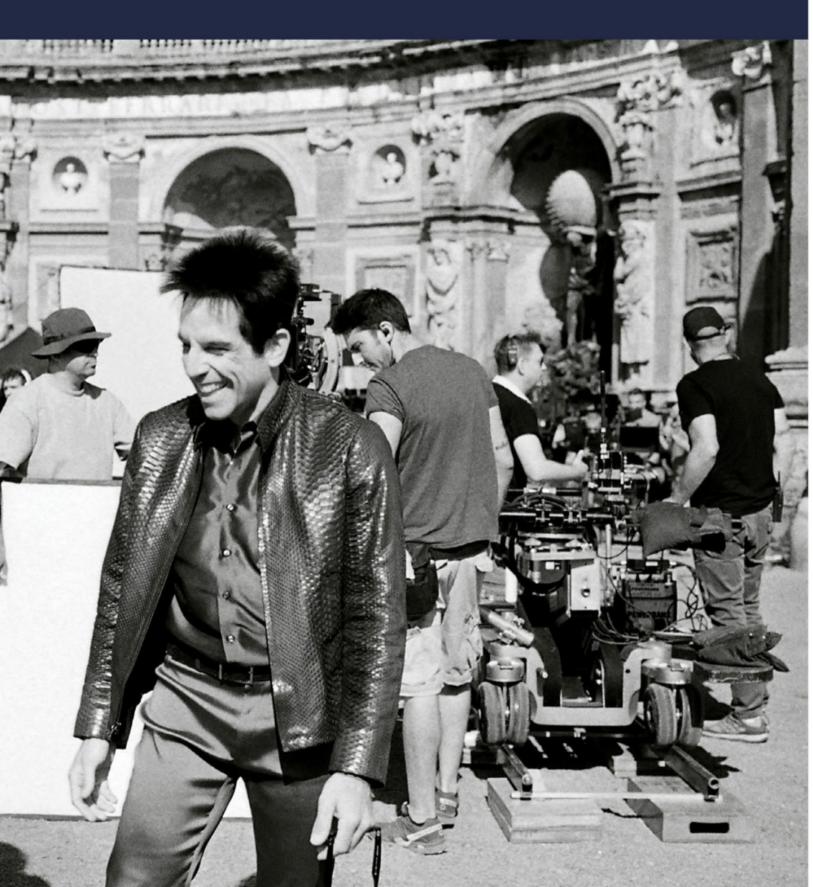
running cost greatly reduced. Nonetheless, it's an inordinately expensive hobby. It is possible to make a substantial profit from your horse's winnings, but are the odds in your favour? Neigh.

high clereracing.co.uk; owners for owners.co.uk

The last laugh



In 2001, Ben Stiller unleashed Derek Zoolander, male supermodel, onto the big screen. *Zoolander* bombed at the box office but over the years the movie gained a cult following, even from the fashion industry it satirised. Now Derek is back for spring/summer 2016, but is the world ready for him? Exclusively for *Esquire*, Tim Lewis joins Stiller and his co-stars in Rome and New York to get the skinny on *Zoolander 2*, the best-dressed comedy sequel in cinema history. Plus, on page 162, the legend himself struts his stuff in our survey of the best of the new men's collections



No one in fashion is hotter right now than the designer Don Atari. His most recent autumn/winter presentation which was held in the middle of the night in a former medical waste facility in Rome last summer - was an exclusive beg-borrowsteal happening in the industry. Lewis Hamilton, Mrs Sting, one of the Jonases, the model Ana Beatriz Barros and "noted" fashion photographer Nigel Barker were all crammed into the front row. Olivia Munn. the US actress, flew halfway around the world to perch on a steel chemical drum. Old-media editors and new-media upstarts sat elbow to elbow, and all - no exceptions - had to wade through calf-deep toxic sludge to take their places.

Don Atari's new showcase, which was cheekily and half-ironically entitled Old and Lame, did not disappoint. To specially commissioned music from A\$AP Rocky, streetcast models — literally old and lame senior citizens in the main — were paraded, seemingly befuddled, along a conveyor belt. Terrifying female glamazons called Angels of Death, clad in leather and gas masks,

Derek pulled off a signature pose so revolutionary — the long-awaited Magnum — that it defied many of nature's laws.) But the intervening years have not always been kind to the pair. The Derek Zoolander Center for Kids Who Can't Read Good and Wanna Learn to do Other Stuff Good Too collapsed — literally. Hansel's face was horrendously scarred and he disappeared, with a sack over his head like the Elephant Man, and was last seen in India. Derek, for his part, fled the spotlight for a life of seclusion and perhaps, who knows, even reflection in the high mountains.

"It's really hard to satirise the fashion world," says Stiller, who as well as starring in the original movie, co-wrote the script and directed it; he undertakes the same duties on the new film, *Zoolander 2*. We are in Rome where the fashion show scene is being shot under an elevated bypass in the shabby-chic hipster enclave of San Lorenzo ("Rome's Williamsburg," a local helpfully suggests). Stiller has to be ready to jump both in front of the camera and behind it — this, on occasion, means he will be talking

this wonderful thing you get with a comedy. It doesn't matter what you're thinking, what ideas you have about what it's going to be visually, or tonally what it's like. If they are not laughing, I don't care how beautifully designed the shot is. They want to laugh, that's what they care about. If people say, 'I'm going to go see a comedy...' I appreciate that. But it's a high bar."

For a silly film, it's a serious business. And with that, Stiller returns to directing duties, making sure an industrial-sized vat of Don Atari stewed prunes is in place so that it can be disgorged over Derek and Hansel at the end of the runway — the ultimate indignity.

ZOOLANDER — THE ORIGINAL; the one with the gas-station fight; the one with the walk-off presided over by David Bowie where Hansel removes his underpants without taking off his trousers; the one where Derek is chided by Hansel to "Dere-lick my balls, capitan"; the one where Will Ferrell's deranged Mugatu splutters, "I feel like I'm

'It's really hard to satirise the fashion world. It's hard to figure out how to top what's going on in reality. Everything is so out of control'

cracked whips, thrust pitchforks and discharged fire extinguishers. The clothes were audacious, tiptoeing a tightrope of bad taste: one old man was dressed as a boxer in a robe and heavy leather gloves; another wore a visor and bodywarmer, and smoked a fag. Eventually, the moving runway appeared rather realistically to dump them into the jaws of an oversized meat grinder while the celebrities took snaps on phone cameras.

For the finale, though, Atari did fall back on professional models. And he chose two of the biggest names the fashion world has known. Both have been in exile of sorts and neither had appeared on the catwalk for more than a decade. Epitomising Atari's vision of Old and Lame were Derek Zoolander and Hansel. They arrived on the scene in a pair of coffins.

Yes, Derek and Hansel, the world's least self-aware male models, the protagonists of the adored 2001 comedy *Zoolander*, are back. Much has happened since we last saw them foiling a plot to kill the Prime Minister of Malaysia. (If you remember, Hansel, played with louche flamboyance by Owen Wilson, engaged in a breakdance battle with an evil DJ, while Ben Stiller's uptight

about camera lenses while wearing crotchtight, gold lamé trousers — and now he's trying to make sure that the Don Atari show is both realistic and completely ridiculous. It's not easy. "It's hard to figure out how to top what's going on in reality," he continues. "Everything is so out of control."

This is just one of the challenges that Stiller faces with Zoolander 2. Comedy sequels are notoriously difficult to pull off: do you repeat the formula and the jokes, but risk looking a pale imitation? Or strike out into new territory and potentially alienate your core audience? The decadeand-a-half that has elapsed since the original seems only to have intensified the pressure on Stiller to strike the right balance. Meanwhile, the fashion world has changed and the movie industry -DVD sales collapsing and above-the-title stars facing obsolescence - is pretty well unrecognisable. Is there a danger in 2016 that Zoolander 2 could be so last season?

Stiller has a tendency to overthink everything as much as Derek underthinks it and is well aware of the challenge he faces. *Zoolander 2* needs to be funny. "Well, hopefully people will laugh," he says. "There's

taking crazy pills!" — was pretty much an unmitigated disaster. You might have liked it, perhaps you have even watched it more times than you can remember, but in filmindustry circles, it is a cautionary tale.

It was released in September 2001, a couple of weeks after the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, at a time when a mass audience wasn't ready to be engaged by a male model's crisis over whether there's more to life than being really, really, ridiculously good-looking. Zoolander failed spectacularly to chime with the national mood in America and some reviewers felt its problems went even deeper. "There have been articles lately asking why the United States is so hated in some parts of the world," wrote film critic Roger Ebert. "As this week's Exhibit A from Hollywood, I offer Zoolander." Malaysia banned the film, after taking affront at the key role assigned to their fictional PM, and neighbouring Singapore joined them in protest.

But Zoolander's troubled existence began long before the movie's release. Derek Zoolander first appeared in a pair of short films for the VH1 Fashion Awards in 1996 and 1997. The character was created by

Rex | Starstock | Getty | Vantage News



Above: Zoolander

Clockwise from above: the late David Bowie ("I think I may be of service") presides over a "walk-off" between Derek and Hansel; Derek and his model flatmates enjoy "orange mocha frappuccino" to a soundtrack of "Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go"; our hero smoulders in a snakeskin suit; the original 2001 movie poster — "3 per cent body fat.1 per cent brain activity"

Below: Zoolander 2

Clockwise from bottom left: Stiller chats between scenes with Milla Jovovich as Katinka; Derek accompanies a catsuitclad Penelope Cruz, playing Melanie Valentina ("Interpol, global fashion division"); Zoolander and Hansel (Owen Wilson) steal the show at Paris Fashion Week; a teaser poster; Will Ferrell playing Mugatu in Rome, May 2015



Drake Sather, a Saturday Night Live writer; his name was a nod to Mark Vanderloo and Johnny Zander, two of the most successful models of the time. Stiller recalls, "Derek came out of Drake saying, 'Hey, I want you to be a male model in this little sketch that we're doing.' And I go, 'Well, that's ridiculous.' And he says, 'Yeah, that's why it'll be funny. It's you doing it."

It's a few months after our meeting in Rome and we are now in the Tribeca district of New York City, having lunch around the corner from Stiller's office, while he finishes editing the new film. He orders a prawn salad with extra prawns and a Coke Zero. Zoolander in those VH1 skits is already not an ambi-turner — that is, he can't spin left at the end of the runway, only right - and has two signature looks: Ferrari, his "bread and butter"; and Blue Steel, which he saves for catalogue work and shoe campaigns. They are, of course, effectively identical. "It came of looking in the mirror when I was brushing my hair or whatever," says Stiller. "My wife would say, 'Why are you making that face? Why are you doing that?' And it's just that thing you do that you think makes you look good. Which really has no correlation to reality."

New Line Cinema, a division of Time Warner, wanted to make a Zoolander

feature film with Stiller, who had recently completed a career-defining turn in The Farrelly brothers' *There's Something About Mary.* Stiller was inspired by Mike Myers' *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery,* which New Line had released in 1997—"he was taking these very broad characters and making movies that were incredibly funny and somehow worked in the long form"— and wanted to write and direct. There was a snag, though: because Derek had first appeared on VH1, the rights to the character belonged to Viacom, which owned the music channel, and its subsidiary Paramount Pictures.

Paramount was never especially enthusiastic about Zoolander, but the interest of a rival was enough to push it through. "I don't think they quite got the tone we were going for," Stiller says. "I don't know if they actually wanted to make it, honestly." The script, which Stiller drafted with Sather and John Hamburg, who co-wrote Meet The Parents (2000), went through multiple versions and a disastrous read-through. Meanwhile, Paramount — seeming to miss the essential joke of the piece - engaged another writer for the project and lined up hunky Brendan Fraser, flying high after George of the Jungle (1997) and The Mummy (1999), to play Derek Zoolander. Nothing came of this, but when Stiller was finally given the go-ahead to shoot, the budget was dramatically reduced; he then overspent by \$6m and had to put in around \$1m of his own money as a penalty to complete the film. On release, Bret Easton Ellis was paid an out-of-court settlement because the film's plot — solipsistic models who become assassins — bore a similarity to his 1998 novel *Glamorama*.

Stiller is phlegmatic about that time, even about having to dig into his own pocket to pay the forfeit for going over budget. "Honestly, I don't think the studio understood the movie enough to say, 'OK, we want to pay the extra money," he says. "Which is their prerogative, it's not personal, I really don't think it's personal..." He laughs unconvincingly, "Though it did feel like that at the time."

Such details, of course, are largely ancient history, but they came up for Stiller again when he started thinking about Zoolander 2. This first happened in 2005, just as the wounds from the poor reception of the original film were starting to heal and DVD sales finally meant that it had turned a very modest profit. A script was written that took place in Miami, but again Stiller couldn't agree with Paramount on the budget and Will Ferrell, on the back of Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy



The original Zoolander was pretty much an unmitigated disaster. In Hollywood circles, it is a cautionary tale

(2004), wasn't sure he wanted to appear. A version was hastily drafted without the Mugatu character. "That was considered," says Stiller, "but I always felt that Will and Owen were as much *Zoolander* as I was."

Another five years passed, during which time the popularity of Zoolander grew. Now Justin Theroux, who appeared briefly in the first film as the DJ that Hansel scuffles with, and who co-wrote Tropic Thunder (2008) with Stiller, came in as the lead writer. Theroux, who cops to actually being genuinely interested in fashion, spent time "boots on the ground" at shows in Paris and industry parties. "I don't think most people saw the first one in the cinema," he says. "They saw it on DVD or cable or satellite, so it became [like] this rare piece of vinyl almost, that people discovered and really enjoyed sort of at home. So in that way it was an indie that everyone got to discover on their own as opposed to being an opening-weekend smash. And that's part of the reason I think it's such a beloved movie, because everyone has a personal connection to it."

For Owen Wilson, Zoolander has always been the film that people approach him about more than any other. "It just became a shorthand for doing a face," he tells me on the phone from Hawaii. "They'd say, 'Oh, do Zoolander.' Everyone doing that Blue Steel expression and asking me to do it even though my character doesn't even do it." Wilson found that the film was especially popular in Europe, South America and Australia. When he shot The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou (2004) in Rome, a well-dressed Italian gentleman walked up to him and starting yanking his trousers vigorously in odd directions in a homage to Derek and Hansel's walk-off. Wilson laughs, "It looked a little strange to this girl I was talking to who didn't know what he was doing."

"But it was weird because the numbers

didn't add up to make a second one, even though it was a cult classic," Theroux continues. "With studios, when the accountants recommend making a sequel they often point to the first one and say, 'How much did the first one make?' And it really did die at the box office, the first one."

As time moved on so, in some senses, did the appetites of cinema audiences. Zoolander was unabashedly silly: when Matilda, a journalist writing an article on Derek (played by Stiller's wife Christine Taylor), confesses to suffering from bulimia, he replies, "You can read minds?" In 2011, Adam Sternbergh in The New York Times Magazine called the film: "one of the last all-out, joke-driven comedies released before the rise and stifling reign of the jokeless comedy" — referring explicitly to The Hangover (2009) and Judd Apatow movies such as The 40-Year-Old Virgin (2005), which tended to favour crude visual

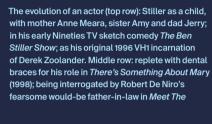












Parents (2000). Bottom row: playing opposite
Gwyneth Paltrow and Gene Hackman in The Royal
Tenenbaums (2001); with the late Robin Williams in
Night at the Museum (2006); leading a blacked-up
Robert Downey Jr and Jack Black in Tropic Thunder
(2008); looking at stills with Greta Gerwig and Rhys
Ifans on the set of Greenberg (2010); alongside
Naomi Watts in While We're Young (2014)







gags and improvised bro-ishness over conventional jokes. In this climate, *Zoolander* 2 started to look like even more of a risk.

All the while, Derek and his crew were getting older and, in fashion terms, lamer. "Every time we'd go back into it another five years had gone by or whatever," says Stiller. "So, in the first script Derek Junior, his son, was like four years old and then he's 10. Now he's 14! Literally, we had to change the story. But eventually we got to a place where all the planets aligned."

So, IT IS A SMALL MIRACLE that Zoolander 2 exists at all. But the draining, soul-sapping experience of making the original has never left Stiller, as becomes clear very quickly when you speak to him about the new film. From the outside, it is easy to paint Stiller's career in primary colours: he has been in huge films (Meet The Parents, Night at the Museum and Madagascar, all of which became billion-dollar franchises) and very credible ones (The Royal Tenenbaums (2001), and two Noah Baumbach pic-

amount of money, that is different, have it make sense and hopefully not lose money. Maybe make money so I can make the next movie.' That's the economics of the business. You just want the opportunity to make the next one. That's the baseline."

Stiller continues, The Cable Guy still apparently fresh in his mind: "It didn't do well and lost a bit of money at the time and people got upset. That's what I wish I'd been more aware of back then, but I wouldn't have known that unless I learned from that experience. And also thank Jim Carrey for not caring. For a guy who's at the top of his game, to make that movie at that point, because he was kind of anarchic and said, 'I'm going to do this.' Most movie stars do a certain thing that they do and stay in that lane because they are very smart about knowing how far they can take a chance. And Jim is that smart, but also decided that he didn't care."

A large part of Stiller's longevity is down to the fact that he really does care. He is a famously tireless worker who — even when he is only being paid as an actor — involves

that's good enough,' he'll always be pushing to get everything that he had in his mind. It's pretty clear when you're around him that he's determined."

In person, Stiller is easy, entertaining and attentive company. He maintains eye contact intently and wouldn't dream of, say, checking his phone while he is in conversation with you. For any human being these days that's notable; for a star of his magnitude it's definitely commendable.

But it is clear that Stiller is feeling the pressure with *Zoolander* 2 and he takes his responsibilities to promote it very seriously. On set in Rome, I was surprised to be joined by an exotic cluster of journalists from Germany, Mexico, Brazil and Australia. But overseas markets are of huge importance to films now and Stiller, especially, is an established draw abroad. It's expected that only 10 per cent of the audience for *Zoolander* 2 will be in America, a statistic unimaginable when the original film was released. Back then, being banned in Malaysia was something of a punchline; this time round, it would be a disaster.

'Every time someone takes a picture, I'm almost trained now to do the Blue Steel thing. Even when I think I'm not, they're like, 'You're doing Blue Steel!"

tures, *Greenberg* (2010) and 2014's acutely observed *While We're Young*). No modern comic actor has been successful for as long and in such volume as Ben Stiller. Investing money in him is the Hollywood equivalent of putting your savings into premium bonds: over almost 30 years, his films have averaged \$77m at the box office.

But it is the failures — if you can even call them that — that rankle Stiller. Especially the ones he himself directed: *Zoolander*, and the very dark comedy *The Cable Guy* (1996), which starred Jim Carrey as a deranged TV installer. Carrey at this time was the biggest movie star in the world and received \$20m for appearing in the film, the first time that financial barrier had been broken. The film did, in fact, turn a profit, but the reception was mixed, and it is this memory that has stuck with Stiller.

"Nobody wants to set themselves up for failure as a film-maker," he says. "You don't want to be, 'I'm going to make this movie that I know isn't going to work! For this studio, to lose them money! To show how different I am!' I don't think even the most anarchic film-maker wants that. You want to go, 'I want to make this movie for the right

himself in every aspect of a film's production. Often he will re-write the script, hand-pick the director and then cajole friends or people whose work he admires (he has a particular weakness for British comedians, especially Ricky Gervais and Steve Coogan) to appear in it with him.

His attention to detail isn't always intentionally comical. While making *There's Something About Mary*, he argued endlessly with the Farrelly brothers, who directed the film, about the scene where he has sperm hanging from his earlobe. Stiller couldn't fathom how his character wouldn't have known it was there, and wanted a scene written in earlier where his character was knocked on the head and lost sensitivity in his ear. The Farrellys, on this occasion, ignored him.

"He never phones it in," says Owen Wilson, who has now worked with Stiller on a dozen films. "On Zoolander 2, he's directing it, producing, writing, starring in it. So, aside from the obvious of having a really good sense of humour, he's an extremely hard worker. He's never going to say, 'Well, I guess that's good enough, let's move on.' Sometimes when I'm thinking, 'I think

Stiller has taken the publicity for Zoolander 2 very much into his own hands. The film was announced in March 2015, when Derek and Hansel strode down the runway at the close of the Valentino show at Paris Fashion Week. At the end of the catwalk, Stiller grabbed the phone belonging to social-media entrepreneur Jérôme Jarre, who has more than 8.5m followers on Vine, and shot Blue Steel direct into the lens.

When production began, Stiller used a *Zoolander* Instagram account to dripfeed exclusives from the set. These have included a selfie with Justin Bieber, who has a cameo in the film. "In the last year of working on the movie, every time someone wants to take a picture, I'm almost trained now to do the Blue Steel thing," says Stiller. "Even when I think I'm not doing it, they're like, 'Oh, you're doing Blue Steel!' 'No, I'm not.' And I look at the picture and go, 'Oh my God, I am.""

For Stiller, who recently turned 50, social media is a skill that he is learning. "I'm in that generation that are kind of aware of it and can play with it a little bit, but it's not naturally my thing," he says. "I'm never going to be that person who feels comfortable

Instagramming selfies going to Starbucks or whatever, but for this movie in particular, it felt very organic. Because that's what Derek is about, Derek should be taking selfies of himself and putting them out there."

The alter-ego experience also emboldened Stiller for *Esquire*'s photographs. While Derek tends to favour zebra print, jaunty cravats, matching driving gloves and luggage, Stiller is dressed, both times I meet him, head-to-toe in black.

"There's a certain freedom to go for it and be silly and ridiculous that I don't feel when I do a photo shoot as me," he says. "And I don't think I ever will. But with Derek it's always a pose, it's always with his lips like that. It's much more a licence to just do the things you'd probably be embarrassed about, but to go for them even more. And that's what the character is."

STILLER WOULD MOSTLY PREFER that people knew as little as possible about *Zoolander 2* before seeing it. He originally hoped to keep it a secret that Benedict Cum-

find anyone who would agree to appear. They feared, with some justification, that they were being ridiculed. To get some actual celebrities involved, Stiller went out on the red carpet of other fashion events to solicit soundbites. That was how Paris Hilton, Natalie Portman and, perhaps the next president of the United States, Donald Trump, came to appear in *Zoolander*.

For Zoolander 2, the task was much more straightforward. Most major fashion houses sent samples for Derek and Hansel to wear or made specially commissioned garments: Derek is mostly in Valentino, Saint Laurent and Costume National: Hansel favours Haider Ackermann and Dries Van Noten. Many of the designers turn up in odd roles; Anna Wintour negotiated the Valentino coup and counselled Derek and Hansel pre-show on their runway walks. "It's one of the most beloved movies in the fashion world now. So it was, who couldn't we get?" Justin Theroux says. "This one was a joy because you just got to sit down and go, 'All right, let's have this person!' And nine times out of 10, if their schedule worked out, they said yes."

go outside of that, it's pretty clear what areas Derek doesn't work in."

Unlike Stiller, Theroux did not find it too taxing to send up the fashion world. "Any industry that has really big personalities, I don't think it's that hard to satirise because their egos are so out of control," he says. "It's about — not being crass — you just scoop up a handful of them and make them all fuck each other and cram it into one character, then you have something that resembles the truth and is also satire."

Stiller is proud of the new film but experience has taught him not to predict how it will be received. "Overall, I'm excited about it," he says. "I personally always just love Owen in the movie, he makes me laugh all the time, and Mugatu for me, I've always been a big Mugatu fan — I'm a big Will fan in general. His character is one of the funniest characters ever for me, just as an audience.

"The first scene we shot with Will is when he reunites with Todd, his assistant," Stiller continues. "And those two guys probably hadn't worked together or seen each other in 13 or 14 years and they just got in the heli-

'They're essentially sexualised seven-year-olds in an adult world. One of my favourite things is seeing incredibly stupid people being incredibly confident'

berbatch is appearing in the film — he plays a new transgender model called All, who usurps Derek and Hansel — but he eventually decided to put some footage in the trailer, which unwittingly and distractingly led to a campaign from outraged LGBT protesters urging people to boycott the movie.

The involvement of Bieber is out in the open now, too, but Stiller is satisfied that at least some of the plot twists will remain a surprise. "Justin's such a polarising figure, so there are people who freak out and say, 'I can't believe Justin Bieber is in the movie!' That makes me happy, and I'm excited for them to see him in the movie in the context he's in the movie. And for the fans of Justin, it's great, they get to see him in the movie and they'll probably have their own reaction when they see it."

Cameos have not been hard to fix. With the first Zoolander, though, very few people involved in fashion wanted to be involved. In its opening scenes, there is a council of the leading industry figures, who are made to resemble the likes of Karl Lagerfeld and US Vogue editor Anna Wintour, but they were backlit and shown in silhouette. This was, Stiller admits, because he couldn't

Even if you're not a Belieber, there's likely to be someone for all stripes in the new film. Owen Wilson convinced his friend and fellow Maui resident Willie Nelson to appear. "I don't know if he was a huge *Zoolander* afficionado," he drawls. "I know that when we play poker, it's always pretty much on the Western channel, but he did a good job."

It's hardly a spoiler to say that Derek and Hansel are very much as you remember them. "They're essentially sexualised seven-year-olds living in an adult world," Theroux explains. "And they don't judge each other at all. I find that so funny because you can put them in these adult situations but you really are writing children. Also, one of my favourite things just in general, even in life, is seeing incredibly stupid people being incredibly confident."

"Derek and Hansel are very simple characters," Stiller adds. "I don't pretend to know what the secret is, why people connect with them. But I can guess at it; they are genuine and pretty innocent. It's always very clear, if the scene is written correctly, how Derek will react to a situation. The audience has a certain innate expectation of how they want to see him be and, if you

copter and he gives him his latte and it's that moment again and they just went into it and it was so great."

So, Zoolander 2: some old jokes, some new ones. Stiller is older, wiser and more realistic. Has he stuck to the budget this time? "Better," he replies. Is that a yes or no? "Close," he smiles. "Very close." The relationship with Paramount has certainly been much improved in part because Stiller is more relaxed but also, he says, because — this being Hollywood — many involved on the original film no longer work at the studio.

"Do I feel confident?" Stiller goes on. "I feel confident that we made the movie we wanted to make. The same way we did with the first one. That's what I feel good about. But I don't know if I ever feel super-confident when I put a movie out there. I wish I could be that guy who's like, 'This is going to change the world! Wait till they get a load of this!"

Stiller laughs heartily but with an edge. Momentarily he breaks eye contact and appears to consider a prawn on his plate. "You know, what happened first time round gives you hope for all your movies: maybe in another 15 years they'll get that one..." Is Zoolander 2 is out on 12 February



Stiller (left) on the *Zoolander 2* set with his co-star and regular collaborator Owen Wilson

Fashion



Burberry

Black/floralembroidered wool jacket, £6,000; black silk-satin short-sleeved shirt, £395; black wool trousers, £550, all by Burberry Prorsum. Black leather Cubanheeled boots, model's own Photographs by
Simon Emmett

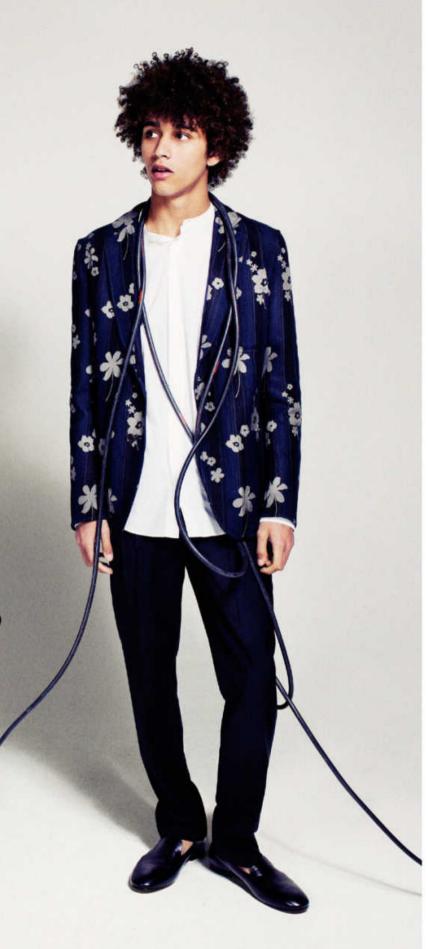
Fashion by
Catherine Hayward

Spring

summer
2016:
the
collections

Hermès

Navy striped/grey floral print cotton blazer, £1,790; white collarless cotton shirt, £405; black wool-mix trousers, £590; black leather slip-on shoes, £530, all by Hermès















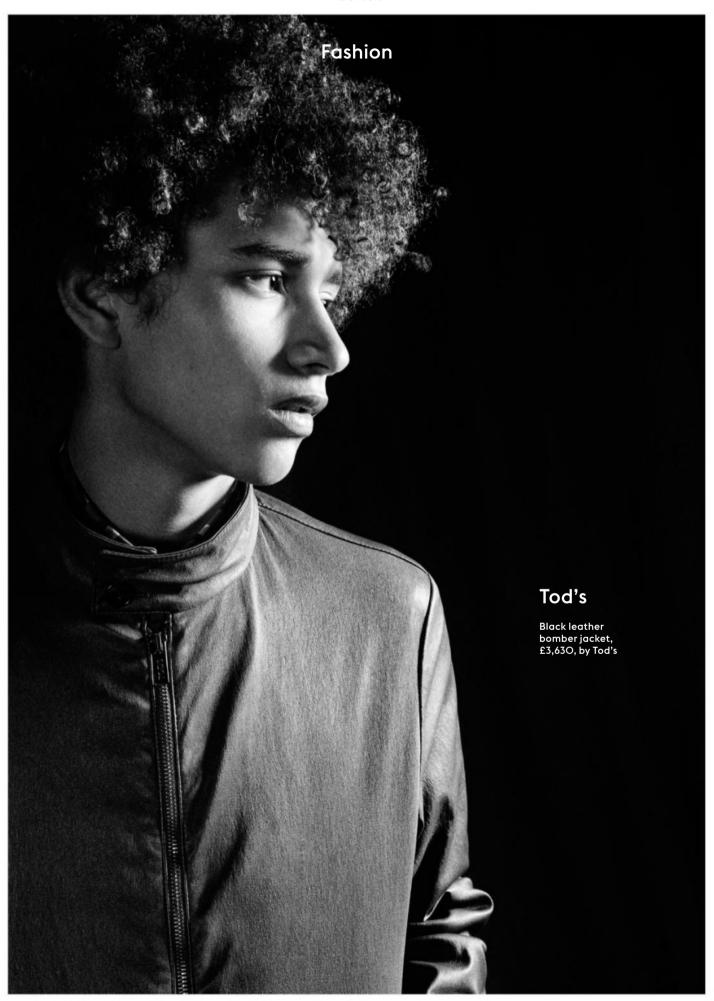






Fashion

















Prada

Navy/pale blue/ orange jacket, £1,085; matching trousers, £590; black/yellow suede loafers, £395, all by Prada







Ermenegildo Zegna Couture

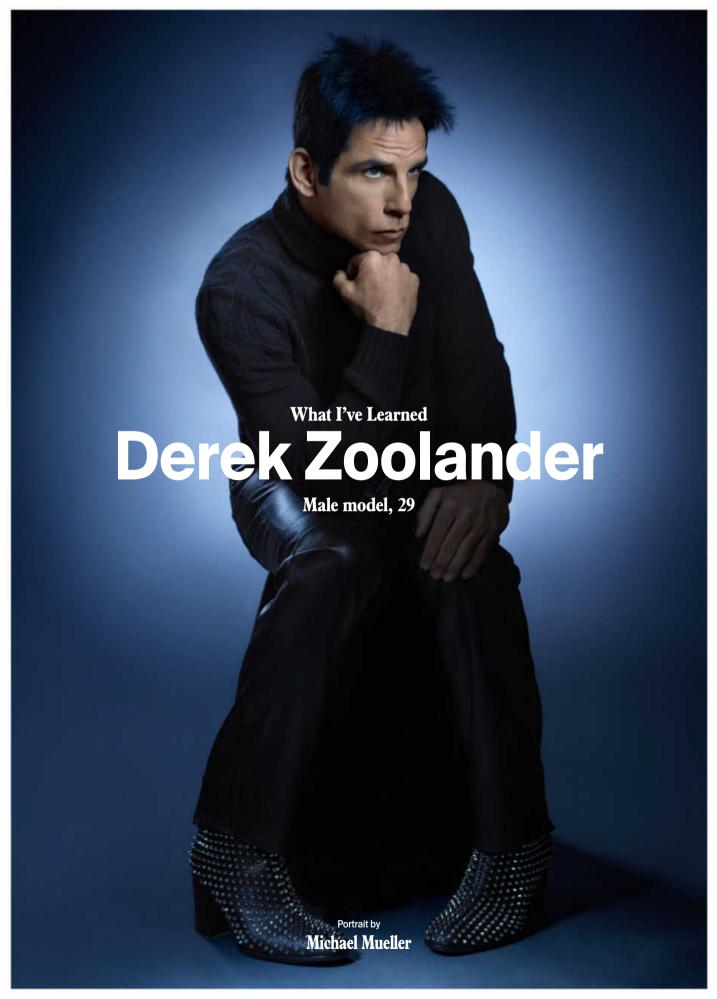
Powder pink cotton blazer, £2,090; green/ pink checked doublebreasted cotton jacket, £1,610; light grey cotton trousers, £790; grey suede fringed moccasins, £415, all by Ermenegildo Zegna Couture











'To model well, your face has to be a blank canvas for others to project their feelings of jealousy and envy onto'

WHAT'S UP, WORLD! I'm Derek Zoolander, and I identify as a male model. Nice d'meet you! This is so cool, literally all I have to do is say stuff with my mouth and then a guy from Esquire magazine types it out on his laptop, so I can say anything I want and it becomes the article. Duuuuuuuh. Beep! Beep duuuuuuuuuuuuuuhhhhhhhhh! See? Amazing! Hi! Hi again! Yay! Here we go with... this? So. Um, I don't totally get what I'm supposed to do? Am I interviewing myself? Oh man. This is really hard... Maybe don't read this part of the magazine...? Just look at the pictures and throw it away?

WHAT HAVE I LEARNED? Well, with all due respect to myself, not a lot. And I say that with complete humidity. I was never really a "school" guy, and also never a "learn from my mistakes and life experiences" guy, neither. I keep my brain empty for the runway and it's worked out just fine. After all, I don't pretend to think people don't look to me for my smartness - they can go to Wikipedia or BuzzFeed if they want to learn something. They look to me for my perfect facial symmetry and a body that would make Leonardo DiCaprio's "David" weep with jealousy. I can proudly say that I've never "read" a book, but I can balance one on my head and walk for miles - and when you think about it, which is more useful? Right?

THEY MADE A DOCUMENTARY ABOUT ME! You might have heard of it — Zoolander? It became one of the most important documentaries since Steamboat Willie alerted the masses to the plight of the working mouse. Zoolander has never gotten its due, but in my opinion it's right up there with documentaries like The Thin Blue Line, Errol Morris's varicose vein expose, Fahrenheit 911, Michael Moore's shocking indictment of the thermometer industry, and, of course, Food, Inc... I forgot what that was about.

I'M BASIC! I'm a young, hip model so hanging out with millennials is what I do. The other day as I was casually Netflix-and-chilling with my #squad and accomplishing all of our #squadgoals which involved getting "turnt" to a truly #IDGAF degree, some of my friends started calling me "basic"! This must mean "cool" because my bros are so down with me and would never H8! I'm basic and proud! It's chill and all good! OK bae, I'm "out". I'm going to go take a #Lyft 2 #lunch, so check out the

#foodselfies on my #socialmedias! And here's a message to the H8rs — don't H8, Appreci8, (your #cray #blessed lyfe!) #iwokeuplikethis #jealousmuch? #EMOJIS

Some SHAMPOO SMELLS SOOOOO GOOD! But don't eat it. It'll just taste like soap!

MODELLING IS JUST MORE DETAILED ACTING.

Acting is a lot like life — easy. Anyone can do it, because it's just lying in other people's clothes. Daniel Day-Lewis was great in *Lincoln Lawyer*, but put the guy in a Peter Pan collar and white clamdiggers and, well, there's just no "there" there. And most actors think too much about all sorts of stuff. To model well, your face has to be a blank canvas for people to project their own feelings of jealousy and envy onto.

Each Pore of MY FACE IS A WORLD of nothingness to explore. It's the kind of thing someone like Matthew McConaughey, as competent a surfer/actor as he is, could never do—except when he played Abraham Lincoln. That was uncanny.

I'M BACK. I'M BACK! That's what they tell me anyways. In my opinion, I never left. I've been in "the lab", working on many new looks, including variations on Blue Steel (Blue Iron, Green Copper, Gold Gold), as well as Ferrari, Jaguar, Sanskrit, Pacifico, Mr Jazz, Arctic Char, Picasso, The Stare, The Glare, Eclaire, Gonzo, Rain Forest, Cauldron, Deppscarf, Abracadabralifornia, Slackjaw, Arson, Ghost Ship, Chupacabra, Trillionaire, Breakfast Breeze and, of course, the look I'm sporting for this magazine portrait. Can you guess what it is?*

BEING REALLY, REALLY, RIDICULOUSLY GOOD-LOOKING is really, really, ridiculously hard. This is a thing that is often hard for the regular-looking, and especially the ugly, to understand. Sometimes I just feel like this gorgeous, sexy, internationally famous prisoner, being tortured at Sean John-omo Bay just for looking amazing.

I'VE NEVER BEEN PHOTOSHOPPED. Thanks!

I believe that children are the future.

Of modelling. The way trends are looking right now, the next wave of supermodels will be toddlers. Think about it. They're twice as young, twice as photogenic, and just as mean. Sure, babies are younger, but they're way too fat for print, so toddlers it is. They'll work for cheap (they don't know what money is about) and throw half the number of temper tantrums of the average adult model. They're perfect, and they're coming for us. Start being fake-nice to them now.

Models are the most important people on earth. It's true.

I EAT TINY FOOD. I'M ON THE TINY DIET.

I can eat whatever I want whenever I want, as long as it's tiny. This way I get all the flavour of my favourite foods, and a tiny amount of calories. Every morning I have my breakfast — a microbagel, small lox and two hummingbird eggs. Adorable! Lunch is usually a tiny turkey sandwich, chip crumbs and a nanopickle. And there's also a lot of stuff that's *already* tiny! Raisins for example, are a tiny food. Cool! Anything goes, as long as it's tiny! One word of warning though — doll food tastes like pencil erasers!

I'M NOT ALLOWED TO DRIVE! They won't let me. How do you drive there for the driving test if you can't drive already? Whatevz!!!

IF YOU LOOK GOOD, YOU FEEL GOOD. This is settled science. Everyone knows it. Look at yourself in the mirror. Is your skin at its best? Are your 'brows "on fleek"? Are your eyeballs level? If they're not, you may not know it, but you've never felt good. You're lying to yourself and others.

WHAT'S MY RUNWAY SECRET? I pretend I'm animals. Whether it's a tiger, lion or the humble, sexy raccoon, when I'm on the runway I am thinking to myself: "Right foot, left foot, right, left, right, I'M A LION! Right, left, turn and pause, one-two-three, turn and pause, one-two-three, right, left, slithering SNAKE! Sssssssss! Right, left, meow! Left, right, left, RAC-COON NOISE! Beware the masked garbage bandit of the night! Right, left," and so on. The rest you'll have to figure out on your own. I'm not giving away ALL my secrets!

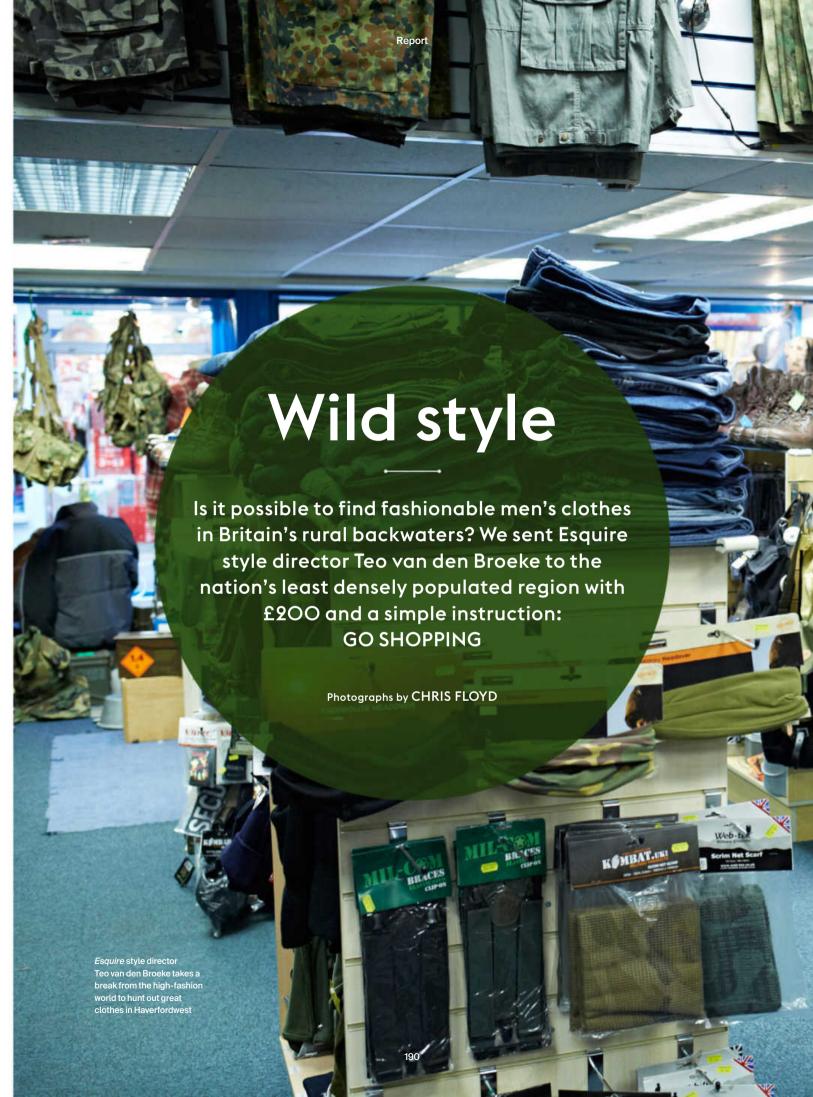
COFFEE ENEMAS ARE DELICIOUS. And they wake you up, too!

Derek Zoolander, photographed in Los Angeles, 2015





Read more in our series of What I've Learned interviews at esquire.co.uk





THE MISSION, TOUGH AS it might sound to an urban sophisticate such as myself, should not have been impossible. In a bid to prove that it is possible for a young man to dress with style and finesse wherever he lives in the UK (even Wales), I was to spend a day in the middle of nowhere, scouring local shops for wearable, affordable and, yes, even fashionable clothing that I would willingly bring back to London and absorb into my everyday wardrobe.

I had less than 24 hours and no fixed abode, so the internet was clearly out: no time to hang around waiting for smartly wrapped parcels to be delivered. High street chains and department stores, even if I could find any in the back of beyond, would be regarded as cheating, by my editor at least. Independents and charity shops, on the other hand, were encouraged. I had been given £200 to spend on an outfit, which, for a spoilt London style director, didn't feel like much to work with. But that wasn't the cause of my trepidation. The thing is, if you grew up anywhere other than London — OK, or Manchester or Leeds or Newcastle (and even then...) — you'll know that you don't typically stumble across interesting, fashionable men's clothes while you wander the streets of our island.

I was raised in a village called Fetcham in Surrey, only 20 miles from central London, but the proverbial world away, certainly in the style stakes. My exposure to men's fashion was limited to the stuff I saw on the pages of magazines like this one. The clothes presented on the pages of Esquire, sorry to say, were not available for purchase in Fetcham, or even in Guildford, our nearest big town. So, when it was suggested I return to the sartorial wilderness on a retail expedition to prove my teenage self wrong — yes, you can actually dress well without regular visits to W1—I must admit I was sceptical.

The original idea came from our cousins across the pond: last year, American Esquire's fashion director, Nick Sullivan, was sent to the geographical centre of the US (Lebanon, Kansas, it turns out), stripped down to nothing but his boxer shorts and a vest, and challenged to find clothes he would actually want to wear, on a budget of \$200. The clothes Nick found in Kansas reflected the character of that unpretentious, rural Midwestern state: solid work boots, which he snapped up for a song, and some pretty natty vintage military jackets.

What is the UK equivalent of Kansas? After some debate in the office, I decided I would start my style odyssey in Britain's smallest city, St Davids in Wales. A tiny settlement perched on the furthest westerly mainland point of the rugged county of

Pembrokeshire, it seemed an agreeably remote place in which to begin.

After an eight-hour drive along the M4 from London, I started my search in St Davids' tiny City Hall, a honey-hued building, which, alongside a newsagent, plays host to a miniature charity shop run by a pair of charming ladies, Grace Davies and Mary Trott. They told me that they'd recently dressed a 16-year-old local boy for a "do" for 50 pence. In that spirit, I snapped up a chunky teal fishmerman's jumper for the bargain price of four pounds.

Motivated by my positive start and the knowledge you can get dressed for a night out in this part of the world for half a pound,

'If you're into fashion, you're not going to shop in Pembrokeshire. It's really limited. There's nothing — no Topman, no HδM, no JD. Nothing at all' — Sean Judge, St Davids

I headed further into town, stopping local men for shopping tips along the way.

"I never buy clothes from St Davids, ever. If I'm going away, or if I'm going to Cardiff, I go shopping there. If I need anything proper, I go to the bigger shops in Haverfordwest," Oliver Blakiston, the young manager of St Davids' Cross Hotel, told me. It was a sentiment echoed by 23-year-old gallery worker Sean Judge. "I live in Haverfordwest," he said, "but I do all my clothes shopping online. That said, I went to Bristol last week and did some shopping there. If you're into fashion, you're not going to shop in Pembrokeshire. It's really limited. There's nothing — no Topman, no H&M, no JD. Nothing at all."

Opposite, clockwise from top: Esquire style director Teo van den Broeke desperately seeking menswear on the streets of St Davids; trying on a Harris Tweed blazer for size at Matthew Locke in Haverfordwest; the shop is not short of colourful argyle sweaters; the proprietor himself; the author enviously eyes a pair of beyond-budget Joseph Cheaney boots; the gentlemen's outfitters does "relatively brisk business"

Undeterred by these less than glowing reports on the region's shopping, and following a quick look around the monolithic medieval cathedral, which boasts some of the UK's most extraordinary wood carvings this side of William the Conqueror, I set a course for Haverfordwest, 10 miles inland from the city and the most populous settlement in Pembrokeshire, boasting 14,596 residents at last count. I struggled to believe that I wouldn't find something good in a town with a name that translates into "ford used by fat cows".

The first thing that struck me about Haverfordwest was the extraordinary number of empty shop fronts. I counted seven "closed down" signs on the shopping street leading down into the town centre. My first stop was a gentlemen's outfitters, careworn as a favourite old cardigan, called Matthew Locke. It seemed to be doing a relatively brisk trade.

"Business is very good," Matthew Locke himself told me. "Our customers come in and support us because they get what they like and they get good service. We look after our customers."

These customers, Locke continued, are not interested in fashion. They require only clothes that "work hard and do the job". He was sporting a generously proportioned brown suit and a beige shirt. The garments in his shop, he explained, are organised by type. Brightly coloured jumbo cords in equally jumbo cuts are lined up crotch-to-crotch against one wall. Equally roomy tweed jackets are scrunched on a rail together on another wall. Matthew Locke also offers a wide array of jazzy argyle jumpers.

When Locke finished serving a loyal octogenarian customer, I asked him where the young men of Haverfordwest go for their clothes. "Further afield," he said. "Youngsters want high-fashion brands but there's not a big enough market to demand it and we'd have to change our model entirely. We don't want to shoot the goose that lays the golden egg." That said, however: "Lots of our newer customers are looking for trendier stuff, so we have to move on a bit. People want slimmer-cut shirts, perhaps slimmer-cut suits. People also want fashion colours." Such as? "Blue is very popular."

Digging deeper into Locke's stock I found a number of items, which, with a tweak, I would definitely wear. There was a smart Harris Tweed blazer from a brand called Torre, which, with the assistance of a tailor, would fit perfectly, and work when worn with more contemporary items such as slim-cut indigo jeans and fine-gauge cashmere roll-necks. Locke also offers a wide array of beautiful boots and shoes by Barker and Joseph Cheaney, among others.























With prices starting around £200 a pair they were beyond my budget, but still prove that Haverfordwest is by no means a dead loss in the style stakes.

Bolstered, I headed to the only other men's shop in town, a tiny, independent sportswear store called The Pines. Though I found nothing to buy among the rails of skater T-shirts and board shorts — it was December in Wales and I'm 28 years old — store owner Kayleigh Rogers shed some light on the way local men dress.

"It's funny, when you go out you can tell who the younger lads are, because they're the ones who get suited and booted. They want to dress like the Essex boys they see on TV," she laughs. "But as guys get older they slowly morph back into the Pembrokeshire way and just wear scabby jeans and T-shirts out. My friend Adam is the only person I know who is into designer clothes, but he can only get that stuff in London. He even went up to Edinburgh to buy a coat last week. That's how far you need to go for good stuff."

Feeling slightly desperate, I decided to drive back out of town to visit the Solva Woollen Mill, which I'd spied on the road to St Davids. Set on the edge of a tiny stream and enveloped by overgrown pine trees, the mill looked like the kind of place where your grandma would have bought clothes back in the day, with walls made of wood, and woollen jumpers, scarves and blankets piled up to the (dangerously low) ceiling.

Here, I managed to find a roughly knitted wool tie in taupe, which wouldn't have looked out of place on the shelves of Drake's in Mayfair (it was a snip at £14). Meanwhile, Esquire photographer Chris Floyd bought an immaculately knitted fisherman's jumper (£40). With a more positive head on my wool-clad neck, I headed back to Haverfordwest on a lead that there was an army surplus store somewhere in town that I'd missed first time around.

Garishly lit and organised like a jumble sale, Brewer Army Surplus on Bridge Street in Haverfordwest has the boiled mushroom scent of a place that only sells second-hand clothing. Greeted by two weather-beaten Welsh ladies, eager to dress me, and a sea of muddy greens, easy greys and imperial blues, I felt what was left of the £200 start to burn a hole in my pocket.

A cropped navy blue RAF bomber jacket cut from thick cotton had a soft feel and a smart, clipped cut — not dissimilar to the jackets Prada showed for autumn/winter 2015, in fact. It fitted like a dream and was a bargain at £18. Sticking with the RAF theme, a ribbed, midnight blue jumper with epaulettes and elbow patches looked great beneath the simplicity of my new bomber.

Opposite, clockwise from top: trawling through a St Davids charity shop, the author eventually landed a teal fisherman's jumper for £4; clad in surplus-store army jacket and quilted liner on the Pembrokeshire shore; buoyed by the purchase of an RAF bomber jacket for just £18, the author rummages through the racks of Brewer Army Surplus in Haverfordwest but, alas, the US Army desert boots are a size too small

What was most surprising about this reasonably priced army surplus gear was how every garment reminded me of clothing I'd seen on the runways of London, Paris and Milan

PEMBROKESHIRE'S SUPPLIERS OF COOL CUT-PRICE APPAREL. KEEP RECEIPT AS PROOF OF PURCHASE

KEEP RECEIPT AS PROOF OF PURCHASE
Teal fisherman's jumper £ 04.00
Taupe knitted wool tie $£$ 14.00
Navy RAF bomber jacket £ 18.00
Navy RAF jumper with epaulettes and elbow patches £ 20.00
Olive-green sleeveless quilted liner £ 08.00
Lee denim jeans £ 14.00
Converse high-tops £ 05.00
Camo army jacket £ 30.00
CASH £ 200.00 CHANGE DUE £ 87.00

High quality and functional (fighter pilots don't want jumpers that won't keep them warm), the pullover was a steal at £20, and of higher quality than most sweaters you'll find on the High Street.

My energy levels replete (the lunchtime scampi and chips was working its magic), the bargains continued to jump from the rails. The olive-green, sleeveless, quilted liner of an oversized TA parka looked great worn beneath my bomber and was only £8. A pair of calf-skimming dusty suede US Army desert combat boots would have looked great with some jeans but were a little small for me, so had to be left behind.

Speaking of denim, it wasn't just military gear on sale in Brewers — a pair of bleached denim Lee jeans, similar to those worn by Marty McFly in *Back to the Future*, was probably my star buy. The high-waisted, Eighties style with a straight-cropped leg felt surprisingly modern and clean cut, and looked great with the Converse high-tops I'd picked up for a fiver in one of the charity shops in town. What's more, they cost a mere £14, less than you'd pay for lunch from Whole Foods in London.

My final purchase, the most expensive at a whopping £30, was an updated version of my M65 army jacket. Perfect for my apelike arms, the nip in the waist and density of fabric made me think of something I tried on in Saint Laurent a few years ago (though that jacket came in at around £800), and the subtle camouflage pattern looked surprisingly elegant when worn with my usual uniform of blue wool trousers, white T-shirt and charcoal wool overshirt.

What was most surprising about this unexpected treasure trove of reasonably priced army surplus gear was how every garment reminded me of the clothing I'd recently seen on the runways of London, Paris and Milan. It's long been said that men are drawn to clothes that boast function over form, and nowhere is this more prevalent than in military garb.

The boot of my Range Rover Evoque now full, I headed back to my hotel in St Davids to try my new outfits on for size. Having only spent £113 of my £200 budget, I couldn't help but feel smug with my haul. The clothes I found were wearable, smart and serviceable. OK, I didn't find much in the way of affordable tailoring — short of a few four-button plastic suits from charity shops — but if nothing else, my 24-hour odyssey in Wales proved that with a bit of imagination (and a slightly panicked few hours of searching) it's more than possible to dress well, even if you live in the back end of beyond.

Now, does anyone know of a good army surplus store in W1?







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Ralph Lauren Purple Label's leather saddlebag backpack

With functional garments like cargo pants and worker jackets currently dominating menswear collections, practical accessories are likewise in high demand. Take the humble backpack. Once the preserve of schoolchildren — and adults who should know better — over the past few seasons, the backpack has been reimagined in ever more luxurious iterations. This tan saddlebag style by Ralph Lauren Purple Label is cut from sublimely supple, five-day tanned calf leather. It features *marca punto* stitching — a centuries-old Florentine process that embosses and seals each stitch using heat — meaning that this backpack will last infinitely longer than any nylon one ever could.



